

The Nation.

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OCT 11

EDITORIAL

SOAKING THE MIDDLE CLASS

The bipartisan budget package was a wreck of a bundle, wrapped in hypocrisy, reeking of inequity and empty of reform. Only because the inane "process" of its preparation lasted so long was it possible to find anybody willing to accept delivery. Democratic conferees seemed worn out from opposing (successfully, if perhaps temporarily) President Bush's proposal to cut the capital gains tax. Most Republicans finally got it through their thick skulls that the taxes on luxury items (yachts, expensive cars, jewelry) were trivial compared with the levies imposed on the middle class. And no one raised a real fuss when Medicare premiums were almost doubled (and deductibles jacked up as well) and the fabled "peace dividend" was scuttled.

When it went to Congress, the budgetary entente encountered stormy seas. Right-wingers were enraged over Bush's perfidy in raising taxes at all. Some Democrats worried that the Medicare hits would cause a backlash among elderly voters. Liberals attacked the inequity of the tax increases and called for deeper cuts in defense.

There's no doubt about the package's unfairness. According to the joint Tax Committee of Congress, the hike for Americans with incomes of \$20,000 to \$30,000 would be nearly twice that for those in the \$200,000-plus bracket.

The point is that a nonregressive solution was readily available. The top 5 percent of U.S. households earn about \$650 billion a year. Jumping their tax rate to a measly 38 percent (it was 70 percent under Nixon and Ford) would raise \$65 billion this year—ample to meet all the requirements for deficit reduction. Obviously, if fairness is the concern, that is the way to go. But the Administration's first priority is taxing those people least who have the most to spend.

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NOW THE '92 SCENARIO

MARIO CUOMO IS UP AND RUNNING

MICHAEL TOMASKY

The day looked ripe, all in all, for a little Democratic feel-goodism. A political crowd made up mostly of Democrats had assembled in Dobbs Ferry, New York, to watch Governor Mario Cuomo sign a bill reforming state adoption laws, but first the Governor would pose for some photographs with Cynthia Johnson, a Democrat running for the local State Senate seat against the incumbent Republican, Mary Goodhue. The State Senate being of great concern to Cuomo, for reasons we'll get into shortly, the event seemed a useful one for him and especially for Johnson, who no doubt looked forward to a photograph with, and maybe a laudatory quote from, the Governor for her campaign literature. Never mind that the adoption bill's main sponsor in the Senate was the very Republican Johnson is running against; that could be finessed perhaps by tossing a few small compliments her way and moving on to other business. So it struck some listeners as more than strange when Cuomo launched into a description of opponent Goodhue's "high intelligence," "sweet sensitivity" and "extreme perceptiveness," building to the conclusion that he found it hard to believe she was a registered Republican. Johnson was floored. "I thought," she told the New York *Daily News*, "I was on the governor's ticket."

No one gives Johnson much of a chance against Goodhue. But the episode reminded Cuomo-watchers of the Governor's comportment during his

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LETTERS.

OF SYLVAN GIANTS AND SAPLINGS

Washington, N.C.

"Old-Growth Forests—The Last Stand" [July 9] is inspiring reading, but Wilbur Wood obscures a crucial issue by discrediting the claim that "young trees will absorb more carbon dioxide . . . than 'decadent' old-growth trees." The CO₂-absorbing function of trees is active mostly during the process of early growth, since it is the formation of the trunk that fixes the most carbon. From the tree harvester's perspective, the mature trees that have little growth ahead of them are the more sensible choice for harvest, for once a forest reaches full maturity, it no longer extracts more carbon from the atmosphere than it releases. At any one time, the mature trees may fix plenty of CO₂, but they also release just as much via plant respiration.

Wood was right to imply that the old sylvan giants are among Earth's primary means of controlling atmospheric CO₂, but the mode of control is static: As a vast carbon reservoir, these trees store millions of tons of carbon in their gargantuan trunks. If we're going to harvest the older trees, however, it is critically important that the wood not be allowed to rot or burn, for atmospheric balance requires that the fixed carbon stay fixed—in a form that is recycled or not soon discarded. In a biological sense, the paper on which these words are written is more precious than its equivalent in gold.

Many people question the idea of replacing old trees with young trees in order to curb global warming. A recent Oregon State University study of forests in the Pacific Northwest shows that replacing old-growth forests with faster-growing young trees will not help slow the greenhouse effect. They also examined the fate of harvested wood from old-growth forests and found that large portions are burned or turned into paper and wood chips that rapidly decompose and release CO₂. About half the carbon in the cut trees may be lost into the atmosphere in only a few years.

Clearly the virgin and ancient-growth forests should be left alone, as their ecosystems are too fragile, and "civilized" humans are still too clumsy in matters of stewardship.

Mark N. Mead

HARDWOODS

Santa Fe, N.M.

It was encouraging to see some mention in the American press of Japan's devastating timber policies. Despite its old image as a nation in harmony with nature, Japan's domestic forests were sacrificed to the military buildup of World War II. And timber brought to Japan from abroad is largely wasted, going mostly for disposable molds used for the pouring of concrete in Japan's construction boom. The world's largest importer of tropical hard-

wood, Japan takes more than 90 percent of its logs from Malaysia. Sarawak, on Borneo, is host to the fastest cutting of timber anywhere in the world. Blockades of logging roads by minority Dayak tribes—who are facing starvation and the permanent demise of their culture—have brought them jailings, fines and beatings. Protests by environmentalists in Japan have had little effect. Hopefully, word of Borneo will continue to emerge in our press before we, too, confront disasters similar to those plaguing the Dayak protesters.

Daniel Masler

LOGGERHEADS

Portland, Ore.

Wilbur Wood makes many telling points about old-growth forests, but he flubs the one about the benevolent loggers who anguish as much over clearcuts as about "someone driving a six-inch metal spike into a tree they may have to cut someday." If they're prepared to cut that more-than-hypothetical last old-growth tree, it's hard to imagine them anguishing over a clearcut. If talk about spiking is polarizing, talk about that last cut is absolutely chilling.

Robert Cohen

WOOD REPLIES

Roundup, Mont.

Mark Mead is right. I was aware of the Oregon State University study, and I drew on this awareness when I wrote about young trees versus "decadent" old ones. I should have used the word "forests" instead of "trees." Indeed, even in the rainy Pacific Northwest where trees grow fast, young forests will not absorb more carbon dioxide than old-growth forests. One big reason they will not—and thus do not help alleviate our potentially runaway greenhouse effect—is that discarded parts of those harvested old-growth forests are burned or allowed to rot, releasing more CO₂ than even carbon-gobbling young forests can balance out. As for the drier northern Rockies, I keep an eye on some of the eroding clearcuts on steep high slopes and despair at how hard it will be for young forests to re-establish very soon here—if at all.

Daniel Masler laments that tropical hardwood forests are falling to produce disposable molds for concrete in Japan. Appalling as this is, it is only the norm in our globalized rape-and-run economy, controlled by multinational corporate and governmental entities and based on the illusion that the more we consume the richer we are. New idea (or an old one): The more we conserve, replant, recycle, the richer we are.

My response to Robert Cohen is that some loggers are benevolent and some are assholes; some environmentalists are benevolent and some are assholes. No one will save that last old-growth tree by standing between it and a

chain saw; the saving has to happen a long time before that. Part of that saving means for environmentalists and loggers, locals and outsiders, to see one another as people with a lot more to lose than to gain if Earth's last ancient forests go down.

Wilbur Wood

REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEONE

Providence, R.I.

I was deeply gratified to see Margaret Spillane's superb article on Trinity Rep in the August 27/September 3 issue ["Theater"]. Spillane has exposed both the duplicity surrounding Anne Bogart's "all-but-at-gunpoint resignation" (which has been dutifully concealed by the Providence and New York newspapers) and the potentially disastrous consequences of this new, covert form of censorship which, as she insists, is far more dangerous than the threats of Jesse Helms.

I would like to add one disturbing bit of information, which *The Providence Journal* has declined to report and which seems to bode particularly badly for the new regime at Trinity. Bogart had scheduled Paula Vogel's brilliant new play about AIDS, *The Baltimore Waltz*, as part of her projected second season and had applied for a grant from the A.T.&T. New Play Program to support the play's development. On July 24, *The Providence Journal* printed an article by Vogel titled "In Praise of Anne Bogart," which lauded her for employing several gifted women and for her efforts to reach out to other theaters in Rhode Island. It was a generous article—very supportive of Trinity and its new administration. Six days later, the A.T.&T. program awarded Trinity \$120,000 for a production of *The Baltimore Waltz*, an amount that would have contributed considerably to cutting the theater's much-publicized \$1.5 million deficit. The very next day, Richard Jenkins, the new artistic director, called A.T.&T. and withdrew the application.

I do not know whether Jenkins's telephone call was an act of revenge for Vogel's article—although that conclusion is unavoidable. I do know, however, that it is distressingly consistent with Trinity's current attempt to turn Bogart into a nonperson, her year in Providence into the season that never was and to transform what was to have been an exciting second season into little more than extravagant and boring community theater.

David Savran

CALL ME ANYTHING, BUT . . .

Brandon, Fla.

Although *The Nation* at times is a little conservative for my tastes, I still consider it to be the finest news publication in America. It was with great alarm, therefore, that I read a reference in your recent editorial, "Khmer

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EDITORIALS.

Rent-a-Newspaper

At first glance, the special section of *The New York Times* for Sunday, September 30, appeared to be merely an acute case of self-aggrandizement: a deep and reverent bow to the paper's own Op-Ed page on its twentieth anniversary. Inside, however, the twenty-page tribute turned out to be little more than an unmarked advertising supplement for the

Mobil Corporation, which bought (for about \$300,000) eight full-page encyclicals—including a wet kiss open letter from Mobil C.E.O. Allen Murray to *Times* publisher Arthur Sulzberger and a pitch for free trade headlined "Money talks."

Alas, it speaks rather softly for Op-Ed page contributors, who, the *Times* observed with a certain cocky penuriousness, have settled for "an inflation-proof \$150" per article for a decade now. But Mobil and its Fortune 500 bunkmates have shouted at us regularly for the past twenty years from their Op-Ed billboards in the *Times* and other major dailies.

As Michael Conroy nicely explained, "If there is one commonality among newspapers, it's that you can reach the power structure in government and the professions."

Michael Conroy is president of the International Herald Tribune US Inc. and was touting the latest wrinkle in Op-Ed salesmanship—or, as the *Times* billboard announced it on September 4, "HOW TO INFLUENCE GLOBAL DECISION MAKERS IN THE 90'S: Worldwide Op-Ed advertising in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* [and the] *International Herald Tribune*." Like the corporate advertisers they seek, the *Times* and *Post* are also conglomerates in the Fortune 500 brotherhood, with combined 1989 sales of \$3.25 billion and profits of \$465 million. Conveniently, they also each own a third of the *Herald Trib*; so, what the hell, why not stitch together "a powerful combination buy on three respected opinion pages that takes you to global leaders"?

This year, a one-time buy on the Op-Ed page in the three papers (combined daily circulation: 2.3 million) costs \$35,945, with a 3 percent discount for three insertions and a 6 percent discount for six. Since ad sales have not been going well, the discounts next year will be greater, in the hope that corporations will flock—in Robert Sherrill's words—to rent space on the inside of the papers' craniums [see "Mobil News That's Fit to Print," January 27, 1979].

Last January 3, the *Post*'s David Broder, dean of Washington political columnists, decried on page A15 the decline of democracy through the "purchase of access to elected officials." The same day, on page A13, the *Post* ran an open invitation to corporate advertisers to place their propaganda broadsides on the paper's much-read federal page. This juxtaposition moved Michael Pertschuk, co-director of the Advocacy Institute in Washington, D.C. (and a *Nation* board member), to write *Post* publisher Donald Graham proposing that one in four ads on the federal page be devoted to pro bono issue advertising by noncorporate, nonaffluent constituencies. Graham replied that it was an interesting idea, and that was that.

Interesting ideas—or the lack of them—are the issue here. While the mainstream newspapers cater to self-serving corporate advertisers, Op-Ed page editors carefully paddle the middle course. With occasional exceptions, most Op-Ed pages leave a predictable and narrow wake of political opinion written by established "names" in government, academe or the think tanks. In the twenty years since the *Times* dared to let outsiders speak opposite its editorial page, the nation's press has become more—not less—homogenized: *The Daily Univox*.

Consider the case of Bandar bin Sultan al-Saud, Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to the United States, who on September 26 managed to get his open letter to King Hussein of Jordan onto the Op-Ed pages of the *Times*, the *Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*, and within a day or two into scores of other papers worldwide that subscribe to the *Post-L.A. Times* syndicate. This slick carom shot was accomplished by Fred Dutton, the former Kennedy, Johnson and McGovern aide and now a registered Saudi lobbyist, whose Washington law firm not long ago collected \$1.3 million after eighteen months' work on Saudi Arabia's behalf.

Mitchel Levitas, the *New York Times* new Op-Ed page editor, called Dutton's triple submission "outrageous." Meg Greenfield, editorial page editor of the *Post*, said she felt "sort of had." Their hurt seemed to be predicated on the notion that a spirit of serious competition for information and ideas still prevails in the newspaper business. As for Dutton, he said he couldn't figure out what all the fuss was about. Given the lockstep of American journalism, neither can we.

War Powerless

It was a familiar scene on the floor of the Senate recently when Senator Mark Hatfield rose to lecture his colleagues on a matter of law. Why, he asked, in the midst of the largest deployment of U.S. troops abroad since Vietnam, had Congress not invoked the War Powers Act? "It could not be more clear. . . . Now is when we need to act."

Hatfield was speaking fatalistically: "I know all too well that we will in all likelihood consider a resolution that sounds tough, but actually offers little more than a rhetorical endorsement of existing policy." And so it was that last week the House and Senate both passed vague resolutions supporting President Bush's actions to date but neatly sidestepping the War Powers Act. Proponents of the resolutions in both houses insisted they do not authorize military action, but neither do they seek to limit it. Senator Edward Kennedy, one of the few dissenters, said the upper house's version was indeed a blank check for presidential imperialism—"in effect, a Tonkin Gulf resolution for the Persian Gulf."

Staff members from both the House and Senate Foreign Relations committees had prepared resolutions that would have given Congressional authorization for the narrowly defined mission of defending Saudi borders and enforcing the U.N. embargo. Congressional leaders then took this language to the White House, where the President's lawyers killed it. Even a watered-down version of the proposal was rejected on the ground that it could tie the President's hands.

The Democratic leadership knows better and yet refuses to confront the President. Claiborne Pell, chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, one day writes an eloquent Op-Ed piece in *The Washington Post* flatly stating that Congress must be consulted before the nation is taken to war—and the next day he votes for a do-nothing resolution.

So it goes, as Kurt Vonnegut might say. How many times have Presidents committed U.S. troops abroad and told Congress to butt out? How many times has Congress saluted and said, "Yes, sir"? As an indicator of how far we've traveled from the Constitution, we quote a statement by that hidebound conservative, Senator Robert Taft, in 1950, protesting President Truman's refusal to ask Congress for a declaration of war after he ordered troops into South Korea:

"I merely do not wish to have this action go by without the approval of the Senate, if it is what it seems to me, namely a complete usurpation by the President of authority to use the armed forces of the country. If the incident is permitted to go by without protest at least from this body, we

would have finally terminated for all time the right of Congress to declare war, which is granted to Congress alone by the Constitution of the United States."

Bank Bonanza

By approving J.P. Morgan & Company's application to trade corporate stocks, the Federal Reserve has now embraced the Neil Bush principle of banking: There are no conflicts of interest when bankers' pockets are to be lined.

Claiming to spot a loophole in the Glass-Steagall Act, the Fed has casually accommodated the commercial banks, which have been lusting for more than half a century to regain the fat fees generated by underwriting new stock issues or by their wholesale distribution. The commercial banks were driven from this trough in 1933 by Virginia Senator Carter Glass, a traditional conservative who believed in preserving, not despoiling, institutions. With Representative Henry Bascom Steagall of Alabama, Glass passed legislation that prohibited commercial banks, like Chase, Citicorp and others, from underwriting. That business was left to investment houses, like Morgan Stanley or Goldman Sachs, which do not accept deposits or run trust departments.

By again permitting commercial banks to peddle shares, the Fed invites conflict of interest. A commercial bank will buy up the new shares of a corporate client, charging perhaps a modest fee of half a point, or 50 cents, on an issue to retail it at, say, \$40 a share. If the shares are sold in two weeks, the bank makes a nice 32.5 percent return computed on an annual basis, attractive for bank officials whose bonuses depend on net profits. But what if the shares flop and fall below \$40? The bank appears to be stuck with a loss.

Not really. The bank just stuffs the unsold shares into the thousands of trusts it is minding for widows and orphans. The trusts are a captive market. They wind up purchasing the unsold shares, and executives' bonuses are safe.

The New York financial press, always kind to the Fed, largely obscured this issue and suggested that the Fed had merely allowed commercial banks to trade in securities. But shareholders in the big banks know better and look forward to some juicy pickings.

To be sure, the pickings will be limited. Felix Rohatyn, Peter Peterson and other spokespersons for the rich who fret about the shortage of capital are just as misleading as the financial writers—though better informed. New stock issues are a relatively small part of American capitalism. Large and seasoned corporations raise money this way only to take over another concern. They pay for new plant and equipment out of retained earnings, the money extracted from customers for their products—what Representative Wright Patman called "costless capital." (Regulated utilities can't do this and must issue new stock for plant.) That is why the stock markets deal largely in old, well-worn paper. Rohatyn and Peterson, urging lower taxes for the rich, claim capital spending is retarded because of a lack of capital. But it is a lack of demand, of cash incomes, of pay-

ing jobs that lowers consumer spending and holds back corporate outlays for tools and factories. So the commercial banks will have to exploit their new bonanza largely with the paper of new and untried firms, precisely the shares least suited for the trusts of widows and orphans.

All this demonstrates that the Fed, like any regulatory agency, is the creature of the industry it regulates. If there was an opposition party in Congress, it would smash this grab at the orphans' assets and preserve Glass-Steagall. Indeed, a real opposition would raise the larger issue. Why should the supply of money and level of interest rates be fixed by a central bank surrogate for commercial banks? Shouldn't power over such matters lodge with elected officials, as it does in most other democratic countries?

BERNARD D. NOSSITER

Bernard D. Nossiter is the author of Fat Years and Lean: The American Economy Since Roosevelt (Harper & Row).

★ FAT NEWS

*The scientists wondered for years
Why some people, swilling down beers,
And eating like pigs, still stay thin,
While others who hardly begin
To pick at the food on their plate
Are shaped like your nightmare blind date.
It's fate.*

*Yes, fate—intractable, infernal.
So says a recent scientific journal
Reporting what was found by medics.
It's modern fate—that is, genetics.
If you're genetically unable
To burn up what was on the table,
Then lunching on a slice of pear'll
Just help you look more like a barrel.
And swearing not to have a malt
Is useless. So's not eating salt.
Gevalt!*

(Chorus):

*When he started feeling bad, he
Sang of the fat person's plight:
"Oh, this gut I got from Daddy.
My daddy's genes fit me too tight."*

Calvin Trillin

BEAT THE DEVIL.

War and Class War

If war is a continuation of politics by other means, it also dramatically displays the class system in a manner antipathetic to peacetime politics. Rich men start wars and poor people fight them. After a week of saber rattling by the Bush government about the likelihood of war in the Persian Gulf by Christmas, there came, on Tuesday, October 2, details of the budget deal hatched in Congress. Toss the colossal red herring of the fight over capital gains to one side, and the outlines of another familiar bipartisan plot to shaft the moderate wage earner loom into view. Red herring? The Democrats, virtuously mopping the sweat of combat from their brows, claim they beat back Bush's drive to lower the capital gains tax. But it was always somewhat of a sham battle. A week before the settlement *Business Week* told its readers to stop fussing. Now, amid a welter of tax concessions to insurance companies and other familiar special interests, the Democrats can tell voters that they fought the good fight and won.

The people on the losing end of the proposed package are those already bruised by the rising gas prices, among them the families of soldiers who would be dying in any war. On television recently I saw a G.I. in Saudi Arabia say he thought he and his fellows were there to knock a few cents off the price of gas at the pump. Better in that case he heads back to Capitol Hill or to the editorial offices of *The New York Times* and shoves his gun in the faces of those politicians and pundits who urge a 12 cent a gallon tax increase at the very gas pumps he thinks he is defending.

On Monday morning, October 1, the day Bush addressed the U.N. General Assembly, I was a mile away in Rockefeller Center discussing the gulf crisis in a taping of the *Donahue* show. In an hourlong, highly critical examination of Bush's policy from Ralph Nader, Richard Barnet and myself, not a single member of the studio audience called for war. This was a crowd of some 200 people from around the country. The loudest cheers came in response to Nader, who charged that the people doing well out of the crisis are the oil companies, the arms manufacturers and the big agricultural and commercial interests who had been urging appeasement of Saddam before the invasion. How is it that when there's now only a 2.6 percent supply drop in world oil, its price has gone up 100 percent? Why, when the price of oil in the United States is soaring, are U.S. oil companies exporting oil to Europe? (Answer: Prices are higher there.)

As the Bush government blows hot and cold in the war of nerves with Iraq, it must know well how frail domestic support is for anything beyond the present sanctions mandate of the U.N. The very thorough poll conducted for Americans Talk Security between September 21 and September 26 showed that only one in ten Americans is prepared for war now. Nearly half the thousand people surveyed thought that if their government launched a war, it would lie to them and claim the Iraqis started it. This is scarcely the firm roadbed of public resolve along which Bush can roll his tanks into Kuwait or Iraq, particularly when Saudis like the teacher interviewed by James LeMoyné of the *Times* are so tactless as to

say, "In a way, the American soldiers are a new kind of foreign worker here. We have Pakistanis driving taxis and now we have Americans defending us."

Anywhere but Home

Kuwait is becoming the world's first offshore country. It has all the pleasing elements of nationhood and none of the troublesome ties. After all, what does one need, beyond a hotel to house the offshore people (in Kuwait's case the Sabah clan, now shackled up in Saudi Arabia), an offshore airline, an offshore Olympic team, a seat in the United Nations, a public relations firm in Washington (Hill & Knowlton) and, above all, an investment trust with at least \$100 billion in assets based in London?

Hitherto it's been thought tasteless to opt for overt offshore nationhood. Although the Shah spent most of his time in Gstaad and the Saudi princes prefer Marbella to the desert sands, there was still a pretense that home was in Teheran or Riyadh. With the internationalization of capital, corporations owe loyalty to no one and will seek out the cheapest labor and most beneficial tax codes available. Emblems of the state such as presidents and prime ministers have long since relinquished any supervision or regulation of these corporations. They merely perform the necessary function of levying heavier and heavier taxes on the onshore natives. Now the state is scampering on the heels of the offshore corporation.

State leaders spend increasingly large chunks of time beyond their national jurisdictions, mustering shoulder to shoulder for world-leader team photos which are remitted home to remind the onshore peons that they are part of the world "community" or, these days, New World Order. The excuses for these conclaves go far beyond the point of parody. The get-together in Manhattan organized by Unicef and dedicated to the future of the child had a peculiarly demented quality. Strutting up and down the corridors of the U.N. were leaders of governments whose economic policies are already killing millions of children and will exterminate millions more in the years to come. The chasm between rhetorical pretense and skinflint reality was nicely represented in two *Times* editorials, one on top of the other, on October 2. The one at the foot of the page, boldly titled "Now, Keep the Promises to Children," addressed itself to the Unicef conference and its goals: "Reaching these ends could cost as much as \$20 billion a year. That's a daunting sum, especially in strained economic times. But if children are the future, then the cost of *not* trying to achieve the goals could be far greater."

Perched above these impeccable sentiments was another editorial, "Mr. Dinkins's Grim Pay Precedent," which warned, "With tax revenues falling and the economy continuing to worsen, New York City can ill afford the Dinkins administration's proposed 5.5 percent wage increase for the city's teachers' union." Multiply that attitude a few thousand times and you get to the worldful of wretched children we have today. At the Unicef conference the world leaders notably failed to match any money to their high promises.

ALEXANDER COCKBURN

The Wonderful World of Books

As a useful introduction to the history of onshore Kuwait, readers might hunt up a slim volume called *Kuwait: Vanguard of the Gulf*, by Peter Mansfield, ready for publication just before the invasion by Hutchinson, a British subsidiary of Random House. Back in July, Alberto Vitale, head of Random House, went to London to attend a sales conference of the Random Century group, which includes Hutchinson. Hutchinson had available two books about Iraq and Kuwait. One, *Republic of Fear*, by an Iraqi pseudonymously known as Samir al-Khalil, did not apparently excite Vitale. His enthusiasm was reserved for *Kuwait: Vanguard of the Gulf*, which had—aside from Mansfield's amiable account of the emirate—the allure of a guaranteed purchase of several thousand copies by the government of Kuwait.

Clapping executives of Random Century on the back and counseling them to aim for more of this type of publishing, Vitale returned to New York. Saddam forthwith launched his invasion, thus annulling the promised bulk purchase of the book, priced at £14.99, which now jammed the warehouse. Belatedly Vitale's attention shifted to al-Khalil's *Republic of Fear*, a savage portrait of Iraq under Saddam. U.S. rights had been bought by University of California Press, which had sold the paperback rights to Pantheon, ironically part of the Random House group, for a tidy sum.

Scanning *Republic of Fear*, Vitale found it excessively scholarly and lacking the color and punch that a Judith Krantz or Jacqueline Susann might have brought to the theme. He announced to the folks at Random Century that he was summoning to England a fine writer who would work with al-Khalil to produce a version of *Republic of Fear* more accessible to the common man. Judith Miller, a former *New York Times* Middle East correspondent and then the deputy editor of the *Times* media column, duly clambered off the plane at Heathrow, only to be told by al-Khalil that he did not care to partake in this refashioning of his work. No problem, said Miller; she would stay up all night and by dawn descend with the synopsis of an entirely new work on Iraq on which they could collaborate. She went about her business, but when dawn came al-Khalil examined the fruit of her labors and exclaimed that this was indeed nothing but a remake of *Republic of Fear*. Exclaiming in her turn that she was not just a rewrite girl, Miller swep' off.

On September 7 the *Times* carried a media item headlined "Crisis in Iraq Inspires Spate of Books." The story by Roger Cohen underneath this energetic headline—while Miller was still deputy editor of the media page—showed that, as a word meaning something resembling a torrent, "spate" has come down in the world, here connoting just two books. One was *Republic of Fear* and the other a quickie to be put out by Times Books, an imprint of Random House, by none other than Judith Miller, writing with Laurie Mylroie, a Harvard professor specializing in Middle Eastern studies.

To his friends al-Khalil has apparently confided news of an encounter he later had with Miller, whose demeanor was unfriendly and conversation replete with suggestions that

aside from her own influential position at *The New York Times* she had powerful friends and that al-Khalil's future literary endeavors would not necessarily flourish this side of the Atlantic. (Reached by my colleague Peter Siskind, Miller confirmed she'd discussed a book project in London with al-Khalil. She described him as a "friend" and said she wouldn't discuss the content of their conversations or where and when she might have met him later, since this could endanger his life. For its part, Hutchinson confirms that prior to the invasion, the emirate put down cash in part payment for the bulk purchase of *Kuwait*, which one U.S. publishing informant says involved 15,000 books.)

Miller is now covering the crisis. On October 1, for example, the *Times* published under her byline a most affecting story about Sheik Jaber al-Ahmed al-Sabah's speech to the U.N. General Assembly the previous Thursday. It was of a tone surely gratifying to the Emir and to his public relations advisers, the aforementioned Hill & Knowlton, who will no doubt be billing the offshore government of Kuwait for hundreds of thousands of dollars for due diligence in persuading *The New York Times* to decorate Miller's story with such subheads as "Wrapped in Dignity, the Emir Manages to Dazzle." Perhaps Vitale's hopes will at last be realized, and the offshore government of Kuwait will place a substantial advance order for the forthcoming volume by Miller and Mylroie.

Zwei Into Ein: Volks Into Schwein?

The unification of the Germans was a fairly somber affair, as well it might be. Discussing his dog Harry's ear mite problem with Ben Sonnenberg when Germany was fourteen hours old (E.D.T.), I picked up a copy of Adorno's *Minima Moralia* on his desk and came across this passage: "Fascism was the absolute sensation: in a statement at the time of the first pogroms, Goebbels boasted that at least the National Socialists were not boring." Long live boredom.

Seldom can the birth of a nation have been greeted with more wariness. When Germany was two hours old (G.M.T.), I was at a meeting at Montclair State College in New Jersey discussing the gulf crisis. An East German of mature years stood up and with emotion stated that while its leadership had been awful, East Germany hadn't been as bad as they're now saying and hadn't ever attacked or invaded anyone. After a while he choked up and sat down. Next day I found myself thinking of Brecht, and ran across one of his last poems, "Things Change," written in East Germany's youth:

- I. And I was old, and I was young at moments
Was old at daybreak, young when darkness came
And was a child recalling disappointments
And an old man forgetting his own name.
- II. Sad in my younger days
Sad later on
When can I be happy?
Better be soon.

ARTICLES.

■ HOW PARADISE WAS LOST

What Columbus Discovered

KIRKPATRICK SALE

Although its official quincentennial is not to be commemorated for another two years, the hoopla over the "discovery of America" is already well under way. On the one side, with many millions of dollars and weighty governmental sanctions, are the official Quincentennial Commissions, established now in at least thirty nations on both sides of the Atlantic and planning a bewildering array of parades, pageants, fairs, regattas, conferences, monuments, publications, cruises and exhibitions, all with the general themes of celebration and self-congratulation. Seville will host a \$7 billion Expo '92; the Dominican Republic is constructing a \$10 million lighthouse as the largest Columbian monument in the world [see Amy Wilentz, "Balaguer Builds a Lighthouse," May 21]; Columbus, Ohio, will host this nation's first international floral exhibition ("Ameriflora 1992"); and the U.S. Quincentennial Jubilee Commission will spend an estimated \$80 million to coordinate events throughout the Americas that will, in the words of chief booster George Bush, "ensure that this commemoration will have the significant global impact that such a milestone deserves."

On the other side, with no resources to speak of and only a handful of activists as the troops, are a variety of protest groups, guided primarily by Native Americans, that are hoping to use what they carefully call "the encounter" to raise issues having to do with the clash of cultures, the rights of indigenous peoples, the legacy of colonialism, and ecological protection and restoration. Philip Tajitsu Nash, who speaks for the newly formed Columbus in Context Coalition, has argued that the quincentennial "provides progressives . . . with our best opportunity since the Viet Nam War to come together in a forward-looking, broad-based coalition."

Just what political dimensions the quincentennial events will have, and what messages will be heard by the receiving public, remain to be seen. But if the real meaning of the momentous discovery is not to be lost in all the foofaraw, it seems appropriate to start with some grounding in the actual achievement that is being celebrated, seen in the kind of historical perspective that will yield some pertinent lessons for today.

It is fitting that we begin with the night the New World first presented itself to the Old. It was October 11, and

the moon was just a few days past full, the skies clear. Three small ships from the Spanish port of Palos, none of them bigger than a modern tennis court, were scudding before a brisk breeze of about ten knots, somewhere in the western part of the Ocean Sea. The mood of anticipation was high, even after thirty-two days at sea, for signs of land had come increasingly often in the previous few days.

Around 10 o'clock the captain general of the little fleet, known to his companions as Cristóbal Colón—"Columbus" was a latter-day Latinization that he himself never heard—thought he saw from his post in the sterncastle a light on the western horizon. According to the ship's log, "it was a thing so uncertain that he did not wish to affirm that it was land," so he called the royal steward, who said he too saw the light, and the royal inspector, who said he could see nothing. The captain general kept staring. He thought he could see something out there, "like a little wax candle that was lifting and rising," but no one on either of the two other ships raised the call, so he merely told his crew to keep "a good watch on the forecandle, and to look well for the land." And he added that "to him who first said that he saw land he would then give a doublet of silk," and this "besides the other rewards that the Sovereigns had promised, which were 10,000 maravedis as an annuity to whoever should first sight it."

Sometime around 2 in the morning the lookout on the foremost ship, Juan Rodríguez Bermejo, gave out the cry of "Tierra!" and the watchcrew fired a cannon as a signal to the other ships that land was ahead. And there, "at a distance of 2 leagues," was their long-awaited goal in sight. Sails were lowered, and the fleet prudently lay-to until daylight before making their landing.

Shortly after dawn the crew of the flagship broke out its official banners and pennants, including the royal standard, in a display of ceremonial grandeur. Soon, luckily for their theater, "they saw naked people" on the sands. The captain general ordered the flagship's longboat lowered, stepped to its bow and then, with the two royal observers to take notes, perhaps the official interpreter, and no doubt a few sailors armed with swords and harquebuses to act as guards, he was rowed ashore.

Ashore . . . to discover America.

Of course it was not America, not yet, and he did not discover it. But those are minor matters. What counts, what is absolutely crucial, is that with this act two vastly different cultures, which had evolved on continents that had been drifting apart steadily for millions of years, were suddenly joined. Everything of importance in the succeeding 500 years stems from that momentous event: the rise of Europe, the triumph of capitalism, the creation of the nation-state, the dominance of science, the establishment of a global monoculture, the genocide of the indigenes, the slavery of people of color, the colonization of the world, the destruction of primal environments, the eradication and abuse of species and the impending catastrophe of ecocide for the planet Earth.

Some say—it is highly doubtful, in fact—that Cristóbal

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Colón was sailing for China. It is a shame that he didn't find it. This landfall would then have been but a small episode in the dalliance of petty monarchs and their envoys.

Instead, it began the process by which the culture of Europe, aptly represented by this captain, implanted its diseased and dangerous seeds in the soils of the continents that represented the last best hope for humankind—and destroyed them.

It is best to think of Colón as a man *without place*. He was a wanderer, always rootless and restless; without ever in his life a sense of family, no attachment to mother or father, very little to wife or mistress, caring for his son only as the bearer of his name; without ever a settled home, a place that he would stay in for more than a year or two at a time throughout his life; without even an established name, for it would change depending on the country he was in, until at the end it took the form of an indecipherable, cabalistic signature.

He was a man whose strongest wish was always to go somewhere *else*. For much of his life he was consumed by the idea of sailing westward across the ocean, but once he had done it he was not content until he had done it again, and again, and yet again, going past this island and on to the next, never knowing a one of them past its superficialities, and then ever onward.

He was a man who knew no singular and particular plot of the earth, nor was he ever concerned to know one, for his sense of himself was formed entirely by the sea, which offers no habitation for the human animal. The only place he could call his dwelling, such "home" as he ever was to know, was the wooden deck of an always moving ship, surrounded by the interminable gray waves of an ocean that forever changes.

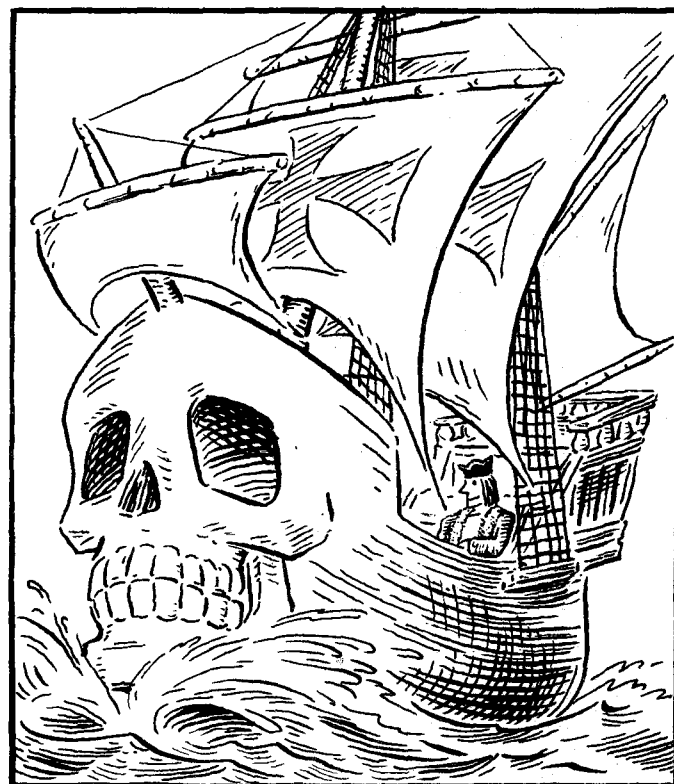
It is best to think of the cultures that Colón brought under European might as, until the conquest he initiated, *rooted in place*. There were differences among them, of course, and some of the statist ones of Mesoamerica were becoming less and less respectful of their ancient traditions intertwined with the sacralization of nature. But by and large they lived, as they had to live for long-term survival, with an exquisite sense of, and care for, the bioregions in which they were established, knowing the local soils and waters and flowers and animals with such intimacy that children were brought up knowing ten different words for different kinds of waterways, and elders could predict with exactitude when the roses or the buttercups would bloom.

Take, for example, the Taino, our name for the people whom Colón first encountered in the "Islands of the Indies." They were a populous society that had been on those islands for some 1,500 years before the Europeans' arrival and that had developed lifeways precisely adapted to the environment. Their houses were large and spacious, perfect for the tropical climate, and made to be especially resistant to hurricanes, with circular walls of deep-set cane poles placed very close together, and conical roofs of branches and vines tightly woven on a frame of smaller poles. Their transportation was based primarily on canoes of all kinds and lengths—the word "canoe" comes from the Taino *canoa*—which they created from local silk-cotton trees by firing and carving

and which were maneuvered, sometimes with as many as a hundred paddlers, with great dexterity and skill. Best of all, their agriculture was centered around fields of knee-high mounds called *conucos*, planted with *yuca* (sometimes called manioc), *bataata* (sweet potatoes) and various squashes and beans grown all together in multicrop harmony. The root crops were excellent for discouraging erosion and producing minerals and potash, the leaf crops were effective in providing shade and moisture, and the mound configurations were largely resistant to erosion and flooding and adaptable to almost all topographical conditions, including steep hillsides. Not only was the system ecologically well balanced and protective but it was also marvelously productive, surpassing anything known in Europe at the time, and with labor that amounted to hardly more than two or three hours a week.

And with a similar genius, similarly rooted in the precise conditions of place, the Taino had developed a social system that had refined the arts of civility and harmony to a degree that was remarkable (and remarked upon continually by the Europeans). So little a role did violence play in their life that they seem to have had a society without war (at least with no known war music or artifacts) and essentially even without individual violence (at least according to the reports of the Spanish who settled among them). So large a role did the social arts play that all those who first met them commented unfailingly on their friendliness, their warmth, their openness and especially their generosity. "In all the world," Colón was moved to say, "there is no better people nor better country. They love their neighbors as themselves, and they have the sweetest talk in the world, and are gentle and are always laughing."

As with the Taino, so with most other cultures of these



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT GROSSMAN

two vast continents: people who lived in harmony—with one another, with other species, with the land—for the greatest part of their long tenure. They knew, somehow across thousands of miles and despite great cultural differences, that they were living in a bountiful world with a multitude of treasures: buffalo herds that stretched from horizon to horizon, birds that darkened the sky in their flight, fish that were so numerous they could be caught by hand, forests in which grew every needed plant. They knew, too, that it was sacred.

Many of these aboriginal peoples had myths of Paradise. It was not, however, of Paradise Lost, humans thrust out of an abundant land into a harsh and hostile world. It was a Paradise Found, the wonderful world they inhabited, having ascended from some darker depths, and it was precious and holy and to be protected. Creation myths, of course, have consequences.

Do not ask, by the way, what happened to those gentle Taino. The story is too painful. Suffice it to say that on the large island that Colón thought so like Spain he named it Española there were probably close to 8 million people in 1492; twenty-two years later there were, by Spanish record, only about 28,000; by mid-century they were extinct.

Out of this history I would suggest some lessons for the present. And the future, if there is to be one.

The only political vision that offers any hope of salvation is one based on an understanding of, a rootedness in, a deep commitment to, and a resacralization of, *place*. Here is where any strategy of resistance to the industrial monolith and its merchants of death must begin; here is where any program of restoration and revitalization must be grounded. It is the only way we can effectively counterpose ourselves to the state and the ridiculous forms of acquiescence and co-optation that it calls politics. It is the only way we can build a politics that can spread the message that Western civilization itself, shot through with a denial of place and a utilitarian concept of nature, must be transformed. By making an awareness of, and attachment to, locality the centerpiece of our philosophy and practice, we can directly and decisively challenge that civilization and its monstrosities, can specifically and creatively offer an alternative.

Such a politics, based, as the original peoples of the Americas had it, upon love of place, also implies the place of love. For ultimately love is the true cradle of politics, the love of the earth and its systems, the love of the particular bioregion we inhabit, the love of those who share it with us in our communities, and the love of that unnameable essence that binds us together with the earth, and provides the water for the roots we sink.

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Juan Rodríguez Bermejo, lookout of the *Pinta*, did not collect the 10,000 maravedi reward or the silk doublet promised by the captain general. Although that amount represented only a little less than a seaman's annual wages, Colón, despite now being on his way to great wealth, kept all of it to himself, on the ground that, after all, he must have seen the lights of that landfall earlier in the evening, and wasn't there the royal steward who agreed with him? In 1493, upon his explicit petition, Ferdinand and Isabella dutifully assigned him this legacy, supposedly raising the money from a special tax on butcher shops in Seville, or possibly from a confiscation of valuables in the possession of suspect Jewish *conversos*.

Not so surprising that the enterprise of Europe's conquest of Paradise should have begun, as it was to continue, with deceit, robbery and ill-gotten gains. Surprising that we have heard so little about that all these centuries. We may redress that error now, in these months before the celebrations, and thus provide the opportunity for a serious and careful reassessment of what the Columbian legacy is for us today—a reassessment that just might allow us to look with new eyes at the discovery itself and the processes it unfolded so as to reflect, with the wisdom of hindsight, upon the values and attitudes inherent in that conquering culture and in the industrial civilization it has fostered. □

GERMANY REWRITES HISTORY

The Attack on Christa Wolf

CHRISTINE SCHOEFER

Christa Wolf, perhaps the most prominent woman writer in postwar Germany, is today at the center of a literary and political storm. For more than twenty years, the West German literary establishment lavished praise on her work and brimmed with respect for the way she handled her role in authoritarian East Germany. At the annual book fair in Frankfurt in October 1989 Wolf was even rumored to be a finalist for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Last summer, Wolf published a novella, *Was bleibt* ("What Remains"), chronicling a period in her life when she was under surveillance by the East German security police. Critics and writers who used to celebrate her work are using *Was bleibt* to launch an attack on Wolf. They accuse her of cowardice and opportunism because she had not risked publishing the manuscript, which lay in her desk drawer for ten years, before the Communist government was toppled. Their most damaging charge, however, relegates Wolf to the status of a privileged state poet, a lap dog of the discredited East German regime.

Christine Schoefer has been writing on German politics and culture for ten years.

If you missed him on MacNeil/Lehrer,
don't miss him again.



On September 12, Erwin Knoll, the Editor of *The Progressive* magazine, appeared on the MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour to give a rare—and eloquent—plea for sanity in the Persian Gulf. Alone among five editors on the panel, Knoll denounced George Bush's belligerent actions and appealed to Americans to resist Washington's warmaking plans.

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A5NNLL

This turnabout of the West German literary establishment, the vehemence of the attack and the suspicious unity of voices in various media are perplexing, until they are fit into the larger picture of post-wall German politics. Günter Grass, the most illustrious of Wolf's few defenders, made this connection when he cautioned, "We should not repeat in literature that which happens daily in the political and especially the economic sphere; namely, the colonization of the G.D.R." This "literary" campaign reveals the hidden agenda of the conservative model of German unification, which is intent not only on doing away with the Communist East but on erasing the history of the G.D.R. and the very idea of socialism itself. Wolf is a sacrificial lamb in a larger project: the ideological shaping of unified Germany.

Why Christa Wolf? The fact that she is a woman may be coincidental. But it goes without saying that if one of East Germany's most respected writers is discredited, all East German writers who shared her vision will be silenced.

Wolf belonged to a group of East German writers who defied the Western dichotomization of artists in Communist countries into "state poets" on the one hand and "dissidents" on the other. Although she was a Communist Party member, Wolf repeatedly criticized the policies and priorities of the East German regime in her work. For years, she drew attention to the official neglect of the individual, criticized the facile treatment of German history, expressed concern about the situation of women and explored the subject of citizens' complicity and acquiescence. In *Cassandra*, she took up the themes of political corruption, intimidation and violence in the larger context of patriarchal power structures. In *Patterns of Childhood* she even suggested parallels between the Communist regime and National Socialism. After her first critical novel, *The Quest for Christa T.*, appeared in 1968, the East German authorities launched a campaign to discredit her as a writer. Wolf continued to publish in East Germany. But her work was printed in small editions, with most copies reportedly distributed directly by the state—to the shredders or to the army. Finding Wolf's

books in East German bookstores was a virtual impossibility; more often than not one saw Western editions, which had already passed through many hands.

The difficulty of Wolf's work, which is characterized by a reminiscent and analytical style, limited her readership but not her following. For many East Germans, Wolf's was a voice of integrity, one that represented the vision of a socialism concerned with dignity, justice and tolerance, in opposition to the politics of the Communist Party. Her immense popularity, together with the respect and recognition she had gained in the West, was undoubtedly more important than her party membership in insulating Wolf from outright attacks by the regime. The fact that those circumstances did not prevent her surveillance and intimidation by the security police—as we find out in her latest novella—indicates that Wolf's ambivalent attitude toward the Communist Party was no secret. The charge of "state poet," therefore, deliberately misses the mark. But it strikes an extremely vulnerable spot. A campaign that identifies Wolf with the hated Communist regime is by far the easiest way to mobilize the anger of the East German population against her and destroy Wolf's status as a spokeswoman.

No doubt, Wolf's critical voice helped shape the process of political self-assertion in East Germany long before she began making moving statements to mass audiences at public rallies last autumn. But Wolf was among the first to criticize the unification fervor that so quickly captured the German imagination once authorities opened the wall. Shortly after the wall was opened, she and fellow writer Stefan Heym issued a public appeal to citizens of the G.D.R.: "We still have the chance . . . to develop a socialist alternative to the Federal Republic." Foreseeing the Western tidal wave that has since washed over the G.D.R., she insisted that a slower pace and a period of self-reflection were the only way for East Germans to find an authentic voice. She challenged the assumption that West Germany's political and social order would automatically provide solutions to the problems faced by East Germany. The fact that her great disappointment with the Communist regime did not



lead her to abandon completely the idea of a more just social order makes Wolf a potentially strong voice in any opposition movement that may arise in a new united Germany, and must be counted among the reasons for the current campaign against her.

But anticipation of Wolf's critical voice in a united Germany could not alone have fueled a debate as heated as the one around *Was bleibt*. Wolf's refusal to participate in the current political, economic and cultural annexation of the G.D.R. has surely intensified the attack. By styling Wolf as a state poet, critics accomplish in the cultural realm what is already accepted in politics and economics: the facile splitting of East Germans into victims and perpetrators. This categorization distorts the reality of the G.D.R. It simply erases the hundreds of thousands of East Germans whose belief in the ideals of socialism led them to shape niches of freedom within the authoritarian social order, to criticize the regime and finally to revolt against it. Wolf is one of several authors whose work captures the complex reality, the living fabric, the burning questions of East German society. It preserves the German Democratic Republic—in literature. But after October 3, the G.D.R. is supposed to exist only as a nightmare that is best forgotten. Literary chroniclers like Wolf are perceived as a threat by those intent on presenting to the world once and for all a Germany healed not only of its division but of its National Socialist past.

The current effort to westernize East Germany in the process of unification constitutes yet another episode in the all-too-familiar repression of German history: The G.D.R. was, after all, an outcome of Hitler's popularly elected regime and World War II. Wolf's literary delving into the past might therefore uncover some Pan-German skeletons in the closet, jarring Germany's collective memory. A simple intellectual maneuver, however, heads off this possibility. Suddenly, people who never cared much for revealing traces of National Socialism in postwar Germany are finding Hitler's legacy well preserved—in all East German institutions and all Communists, and, by association, in anyone who refuses to abandon all aspects of what might be called an East German identity. "Only now," writes Ulrich Greiner in *Die Zeit*, "has the disaster that began in 1933 reached its final end." This collective psychological ploy projects all responsibility for the ills of German history onto the Communists. But East German Communism was not, no matter what parallels one can find, National Socialism. Political repression, corruption and intimidation in the context of the cold war do not add up to Auschwitz, a fact to which Wolf's work testifies eloquently.

The "literary" campaign against Christa Wolf has the simultaneous effect of discrediting her political message, of erasing facets of East German identity and history that Wolf and authors like her articulate, and of depriving critical East Germans of a potential voice in the united Germany. The near unanimity of Wolf's indictment is part of a larger truth: It is virtually impossible to find any reportage on East Germany that does not subscribe to the conservative agenda. This repression of social, political and historical reality represents a troublesome beginning for the "new" Germany.

And in the fact that voices such as Wolf's might finally be silenced only after the Communists are gone, there is an inescapable irony. □

■ A LEGACY CONSIDERED

East German Requiem

PETER MARCUSE

What remains after forty years of the German Democratic Republic? Three things: some lessons, a few accomplishments and a different people.

The biggest lesson is what socialism isn't. Only conservatives now use the word "socialism" to describe East Germany. Most of the left there have stopped using it altogether; a few still speak of "socialism gone astray." For those committed to the socialist tradition, it is now clear that state ownership of the means of production is not a sufficient condition for socialism, though it may be a necessary one. State ownership in any case is not social ownership. For socialists, the word "democratic" can never again be uncoupled from the word "socialist."

The lessons about state planning are more complex. Contrary to the widespread impression in the West, the economy of the G.D.R. was not a total disaster. Its standard of living was comparable to that of some countries in the European Economic Community, its recovery from the war and the burden of reparations was remarkable, and its production of some goods was occasionally impressive. Food, clothing and shelter were always at least minimally adequate—and for all. There was no talk of an "underclass," no homeless, no superrich; social integration was a fact of life (guest workers excepted) and equality—perhaps too much—was largely achieved (the *nomenklatura* excepted).

In competition with West Germany, the G.D.R. lost. Today, within a unified Germany, it is a comparative disaster; yesterday, it looked different. And it avoided the inequalities, the internalized pressures, the unemployment and economic insecurities that helped make the Federal Republic productive. Perhaps productivity and its costs need to be re-examined to see where planning, if democratically undertaken, has advantages over a private, profit-driven market—and where it does not. In some areas, the benefits of a market have become clear; the concept of a market for choice, but not for the accumulation of profit, was only beginning to be explored when unification overwhelmed the discussion.

The accomplishments that formally survive the G.D.R.'s forty years are not many. Women's rights, in particular to abortion and child care, are stronger than in the Federal Re-

Peter Marcuse teaches urban planning at Columbia University and spent the last year in East Germany on a Fulbright fellowship.

public. Rights to housing, nonspeculative land ownership and public control of city development look very attractive to many Westerners. And the close connection between workplace and nonwork activities—recreation, health care, even shopping—provides some salutary examples for the future. The social net was in general indeed good, if at a level so much lower than that of West Germany that most East German residents would opt for Western benefits over their own. (Full pay in the East was often below unemployment benefits in the West. The East had unemployed, too, said the wags, but they kept their jobs.)

But the most important product of this history are people, people who have been through a different set of experiences, who have lived in a society proclaiming other goals, who have themselves pursued those goals, sometimes with, latterly more often against, the state. The “socialism” that was officially proclaimed was taken seriously by many, especially in the early years. Although many left in disillusionment and more withdrew, the rhetoric remained, and it survives as an articulation of goals. New experiences with the West may cause these goals to resurface in the future. In the West, private property is taken as the natural order of things; in the East, the starting point is public control, and, while its weaknesses have been made apparent, its advantages may seem more and more worth saving as time goes on.

For a brief period, some parties on the left attempted to call on a “national” loyalty of East German citizens. While the appeal touched a nerve, it was quickly overwhelmed by Pan-German nationalism. Yet there is undeniably a difference between residents of the two former states. Rosie Will, a professor of law at Humboldt University, perhaps expressed it best when she spoke of the “consciousness of living in a small country”; my own experience, living for a year in each, was that the self-assurance to the point of arrogance of many West Germans contrasted sharply, and unfavorably, with the self-awareness and skepticism, to the point of an underdog feeling, of most citizens of the G.D.R. Any photograph of West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl standing next to East German Prime Minister Lothar de Maizière illustrates the point. Perhaps one permanent contribution of the forty-year experience of East Germany is that at least 16 million Germans are not among those obsessed with power and dominance, not convinced of their own superiority and absolute rectitude.

Even consumerism, that psychological driving force of the Western economy, may yet play a different role in the East than in the West. True, once the wall was open, some visitors rushed back with six-packs of beer and stereos; the pent-up demand was huge. The trade-off between unlimited consumerism and public welfare, between incessant innovation and social stability, was not then apparent. But the first euphoria is wearing off, with rising unemployment, reduced services and more available but less affordable goods. Some rethinking of the trade-off may now take place.

The people of East Germany have learned the hard way some of the difficulties of central planning, undemocratic government and state ownership. Many in West Germany are aware of the shortcomings of the profit-oriented

market, of parliamentary democracy, of private ownership. If a united left, in a united Germany, were willing to reconsider what each has learned, to look for alternatives that are neither real existing socialism nor real existing capitalism but that take something good from each, then the experience of the last forty years might yet leave a positive legacy. But neither blanket condemnation nor blanket defense of either experience is useful. The people of East Germany know better than most what the costs of a closed mind or a closed society can be. □

■ FEINSTEIN IN CALIFORNIA

The Center Isn't Holding

DANNY GOLDBERG

This November's gubernatorial election in California is without question the one that will affect more Americans in 1990 than any other, yet most voters, political activists and even the news media seem to be in a state of numb indifference in the weeks before Election Day. The clever manipulation of boredom by the right wing and the inadvertent complicity by an underfunded and fragmented Democratic Party may result in defeat for progressive forces.

Labor Day is traditionally the kickoff for campaigns. Yet on the Sunday before Labor Day, the *Los Angeles Times*, by far the most influential and widely read newspaper in California, carried not a single word about the election. On Labor Day itself, the *Times* again had no coverage of any of the California races. The local weekend talk shows also ignored the upcoming election, focusing instead on local angles of the Persian Gulf crisis.

Is the election really that boring? Perhaps, but entertaining or not, the election results will reverberate for years to come. Early estimates of the 1990 census show that California now has a population of more than 29 million. The new governor will preside over a state with the sixth-largest economy in the world. As a result of demographic shifts recorded by the 1990 census California's Congressional delegation is expected to grow by seven members to a total of fifty-two, and the way in which the Congressional districts are redrawn could cause a swing from one party to the other of as many as twelve votes in the House of Representatives. (Two key progressive victories in the House during the 1980s—ending aid to the *contras* and permitting federal funding for abortions in cases of rape or incest—each passed by fewer than twelve votes.) The newly elected governor will have veto power over any redistricting plan proposed by the state legislators, so in addition to setting California policy

Danny Goldberg, one of the founders of the political entertainment group Show Coalition, is chair of the A.C.L.U. Foundation of Southern California.

on the environment, education, abortion, crime and infrastructure, Dianne Feinstein, the Democratic candidate, or Senator Pete Wilson, the Republican nominee, will have a chance to influence national politics for the next decade.

There are various theories about the reasons for the current apathy. There is little question, however, that bored and uninformed voters help Republican and conservative causes. One reason is that in a low turnout, the electorate is skewed toward white and wealthier voters. But more significantly, a low-profile campaign increases the influence of thirty-second commercials, and in a TV-commercial battle, the better-funded right wing has the advantage. So unless Feinstein can figure out a way to play up the contrast between herself and Wilson in ways that resonate in the "free media," like the news pages of the *Los Angeles Times*, she will lose.

Here's how the campaign for governor of California has gone so far: Wilson ran a TV ad attacking Feinstein for favoring quotas of women and racial minorities in her prospective appointments. Quotas are unpopular and Feinstein had in fact endorsed them, so Wilson scored. Then Feinstein ran an ad stating that Wilson got more campaign contributions from savings and loan institutions than any other member of Congress. Polls conducted by the Democratic leadership show that the S&L crisis is starting to bother voters and that 60 percent would oppose a politician linked with them. Wilson countered with an ad charging that Feinstein was a hypocrite since she and her husband, Richard Blum, owned a savings and loan. Feinstein responded with an ad in which she stated on camera that her husband owned only .25 percent of the S&L in question.

The fact that the new governor of California will have almost nothing to do with savings and loans was not the point, according to the Feinstein campaign. It is, they say, a "character issue." If so, it did not seem to stick. According to campaign focus groups, Wilson succeeded in confusing voters enough to neutralize the Feinstein charge.

Another diversion from real California issues has been corruption charges from both sides. The Wilson campaign has been accused of planting a story alleging that Feinstein's husband had sold \$2.7 million worth of stock in an Orange County company in the two days before it went bankrupt. On the other hand, a *Wall Street Journal* story reported that a Wilson aide had introduced film industry lobbyist Jack Valenti to Deputy U.S. Attorney General William Barr to solicit the Administration's help in protecting the film studios' control of TV syndication money. Top film executives recently raised more than \$250,000 for Wilson. Wilson implausibly asserts that there is "no connection" between these events. This sort of tit-for-tat character smearing ultimately hurts Feinstein because it breeds apathy among swing voters, whom she needs in order to win.

Feinstein won the Democratic primary against California Attorney General John Van de Kamp in part because her TV commercials asserted that she was "the only Democrat for governor for the death penalty." Many national columnists touted her as the kind of "tough" Democrat the party needs to win. With a strong pro-developer record as Mayor of San

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Francisco, she was regarded as environmentally conscious enough to outflank the Republicans but sensitive enough to big business to appeal to the elusive "center." A widely publicized statement by Feinstein that she favored a constitutional amendment to ban flag burning was apparently designed to identify her as a supporter of "traditional values." Feinstein seemed to be the kind of centrist Democrat the Democratic Leadership Council is constantly championing. Oft-quoted political analyst William Schneider, of the American Enterprise Institute, even suggested that if Feinstein beats Wilson she will immediately become a serious contender for a place on the national Democratic ticket in 1992. A recent Feinstein TV commercial shows her addressing a Democratic state convention. Amid loud boos, she reaffirms her support for the death penalty, thus presumably showing that she has the "guts" to stand up to anti-death penalty wimps.

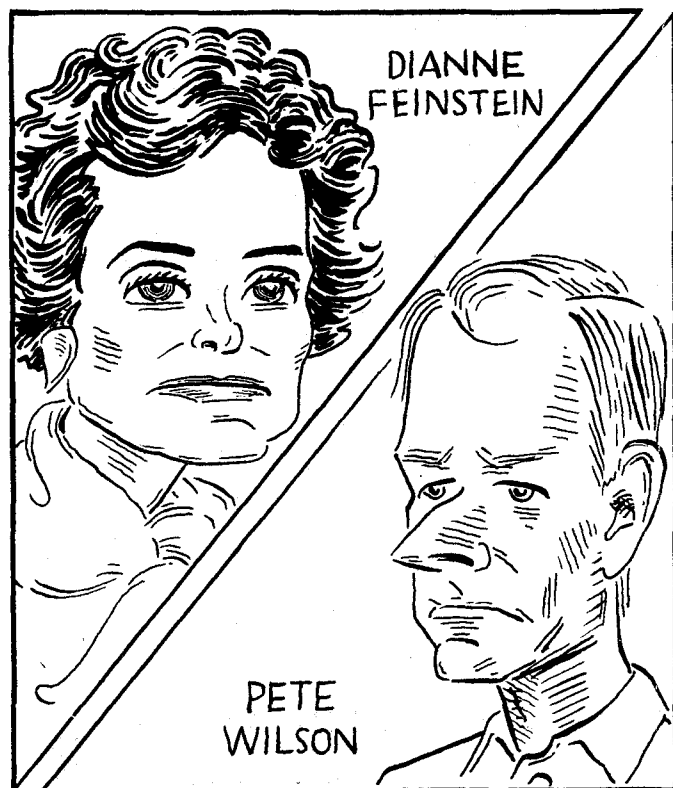
Now, however, Feinstein's centrist strategy is backfiring. Not only are many voters apathetic but Wilson will probably be able to spend twice as much as Feinstein. While California liberals are raising funds for the Senate campaigns of Harvey Gantt in North Carolina and Tom Harkin in Iowa, and for California's Big Green environmental initiative, they have been lukewarm about Feinstein. The activist entertainment community is not seduced by Wilson's romance with the studio bosses and most of them will probably vote for Feinstein. But the actors, directors and writers who are collectively known as "political Hollywood" have had hardly any interaction with the Feinstein campaign and have not been helping with fundraising. Bob Burkett, a former Van de Kamp supporter and a leading progressive Democratic fundraiser in Los Angeles, disagrees with those who are holding back, saying, "I've spent enough time with

Dianne personally to be completely confident that she will be a progressive governor." More typical, however, is the attitude of a Hollywood insider who has raised millions of dollars for Democrats over the past decade: "I know that it's important Feinstein wins because of her appointments, because of reapportionment and because there will be at least some access to her on progressive issues as opposed to none with Wilson. But I am supporting her reluctantly and with no passion, and it is almost impossible to get anyone I know enthusiastic about her, especially with those death penalty commercials on all the time."

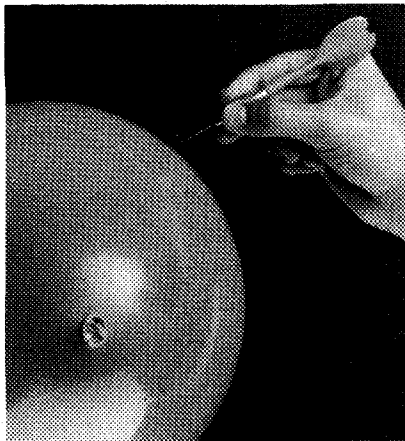
Meanwhile, a recent *Los Angeles Times* poll concluded that Feinstein had only a "slight" edge among voters who chose the environment as the most important issue and that, despite all her tough talk about the death penalty, Wilson had a 44-24 lead when voters were asked whom they favored on the issue of crime. Paradoxically, if Feinstein does win it could be because of the abortion issue. When voters were asked whom they favored on that topic, Feinstein beat Wilson 46-20. Although Wilson describes himself as a pro-choice Republican, he is in favor of parental consent laws and has a mixed record on public funding for abortions. After interviewing both candidates, the California Abortion Rights Action League (Caral) endorsed Feinstein. Caral is so alarmed about the low visibility of the abortion issue that it will spend \$500,000 on a campaign to focus the attention of California voters on the abortion positions of Feinstein and Wilson as well as those of lieutenant governor candidates Leo McCarthy and Marian Bergeson and attorney general candidates Arlo Smith and Dan Lungren. In the latter two elections the Democrats, McCarthy and Smith, are pro-choice and the Republicans antichoice.

Polls and focus-group interviews have shown that a lot of Californians want a woman in a position of statewide power, both out of fairness and because they feel that a woman represents change. Political consultant Pat Caddell thinks Feinstein may win in spite of her centrist campaign because of this perception. Feminist leader and longtime Feinstein supporter Peg Yorkin is concerned that Feinstein is not playing to her strength: "She needs a gender gap to win." Some feminists who are supporters of Feinstein think she has made a mistake by not taking the quota issue head-on. As a woman she could relate personal experiences of being excluded from schools and clubs because of her gender and remind voters that racial and sexual discrimination are the real quotas that should be opposed. Thus far Feinstein has tried this approach only on one cable TV show, but two upcoming debates with Wilson will give her an opportunity to be aggressive about "her" issues if she so chooses.

Feinstein's campaign people took solace in a recent Teichner poll showing her seven points ahead, which they considered remarkable in light of Wilson's expensive summer TV commercial blitz. But the notion that Feinstein could sit on her lead was severely buffeted by the latest Teichner poll, which has Wilson ahead by one point. As Caddell puts it, "In running a conventional campaign, Feinstein is repeating a fundamental mistake, which has led to the failure of liberal politics on a national level in recent years. By appear-



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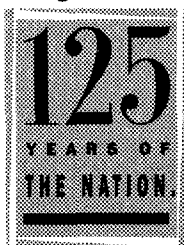
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ing to progressives as if her whole rationale is 'I'm better than the alternative,' she is failing to mobilize hundreds of thousands of politically concerned citizens who are deciding whether to vote or not. When they don't see a clear distinction between Wilson and her on issues like abortion and the environment, they just might say, 'Forget it; why bother?'" Caddell is particularly baffled that Feinstein has not made more of her difference with Wilson on the Big Green initiative, which she supports and Wilson opposes. "For the first time, I'm worried that she might lose this thing."

One bright spot for Feinstein fundraising occurred unexpectedly the last week of September when Federal Judge Lawrence Karlton ruled that the California campaign financing law, which passed in 1988 as Proposition 73, was unconstitutional. The law had limited individual campaign contributions to \$1,000 and is believed to have favored Wilson because Republicans in the past relied on large numbers of \$1,000 contributors, while Democrats, with less access to the business community, relied on larger contributions from a much shorter list of wealthy progressives. Of course, if Feinstein does not have an appealing message, more money for campaign commercials won't do her any good.

Progressives will be making a grave error if they sit out the Feinstein-Wilson contest. Granted, Feinstein has a mixed record on many important issues, but Wilson is a Reaganite Republican whose decisions and appointments would adversely affect millions of poor and middle-income Californians and whose actions on reapportionment would be yet another giant step to the right for an already centrist Congress. □

Mario Cuomo

(Continued From Front Cover)

1986 re-election campaign, when he crushed a hapless G.O.P. opponent named Andy O'Rourke. While using virtually every resource he had in running up the greatest victory margin ever in a New York gubernatorial race, he did next to nothing to help other Democratic candidates. Indeed, he did some things to hurt them: One of Cuomo's television commercials that year showed Republican Senator Alfonse D'Amato offering the Governor a testimonial, thus establishing a friendly link between them. D'Amato's Democratic opponent, the liberal ex-Naderite Mark Green, was not embraced by Cuomo and most of the state Democratic establishment. Late in the campaign, Cuomo did finally give \$50,000 from party campaign funds to Green, but some in the Green camp felt that by then the damage had been done.

By election's end, things had reached quite a sour pass. Democrats lashed out at Cuomo — albeit off the record — for not helping other Democratic candidates in the state. Newspapers rebuked him for running an aloof campaign, pointing to his refusal even to debate O'Rourke. At the same time, stories ran in the papers questioning whether the law

firm of his son Andrew was profiting inappropriately because of the Albany connection. No malfeasance was revealed by any of this reporting, but Andrew did leave the firm and now heads a private housing organization.

By most accounts, Cuomo is doing somewhat better this time around, helping to recruit candidates and making appearances at fundraising dinners around the state to help his party capture the State Senate. Democrats control the Assembly but are four seats short of a Senate majority; consequently, Cuomo has been pleading with his constituency to give him a majority in the upper house.

Cuomo says he needs this clout to pursue more effectively his legislative agenda. But the not-so-hidden agenda can be summed up as "Ninety-two." The operative theory that grew over Cuomo's first eight years as Governor held that he very much liked having the Senate in Republican hands, the better to have someone to blame when government did not go well. This year, extends the corollary, he genuinely cares that Democrats win, since their victories would reflect well on him; he would gain credit as their architect and harness their momentum onto Iowa, New Hampshire and finally Pennsylvania Avenue.

Even without that momentum, Cuomo looks to be the man many Democrats want for 1992. A recent *National Journal* survey of Democratic Party activists across the country found the Governor far and away the most preferred candidate, with more than twice the support for Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey, who came out number two. Democratic elites see in Cuomo a man who can at once charm the ethnic middle class back to the party and, through the presumed power of his rhetoric, convince "mainstream" America that the time is high for a little compassion. It's even whispered, given the lay of the political landscape, that Cuomo could fashion a campaign that would appeal to class concerns. Such a strategy would not likely come from Bradley or other potential candidates in Congress, like Senator Al Gore or Representative Richard Gephardt; as Kevin Phillips amply demonstrates in his book *The Politics of Rich and Poor*, they went happily along for the Reagan ride. It seems not merely coincidental that one of the two blurbs on the book's jacket comes from Cuomo (the other is from Richard Nixon, whom Cuomo once suggested Reagan should appoint as a sort of roving ambassador).

The scenario for Cuomo's putative candidacy goes something like this: He can continue to play it coy with the press well into the campaign season, not saying whether he will or won't run, even after the others have finished dusting the snows of Iowa from their boots. As the news media become more and more impatient, and unimpressed, with the likely gaggle of candidates, calls will beckon from the Op-Ed pages and the "well-placed sources in the D.N.C." for Cuomo to jump in. As the primary season heads toward full pitch, the Jackson Factor, assuming the Reverend runs, will take hold, starting a scramble for a white candidate who's good on the stump.

Cuomo's speechmaking, sounding the broad themes of family, work and compassion, will galvanize the party. His persona as a man who is witty, smart and made of sterner

Michael Tomasky, who has written for The New York Observer, will be writing a political column for The Village Voice.

stuff than most of today's one-note pols will seduce the press corps and the public. A victory here and there, a respectable showing in the Southern primaries (this notion is often mentioned quickly), a string of wins in the Rust Belt primaries, where the working-class immigrant's son will feel at home, and finally, the triumphal entrance at the convention in Madison Square Garden, just a hop on the E train from the Queens neighborhood where Cuomo's father ran the family grocery store. History rarely writes better scripts.

How this scenario will actually play out is, of course, unknown, but there are certainly potential complications. It's not at all clear that Cuomo's luck and reputation will hold out for another two years in New York. The poll numbers are not as lofty as they once were: His approval rating generally hovers in the high fifties to low sixties, down ten or even fifteen points over the past two years or so. He's running for re-election against a luckless sap, Pierre Rinfret; he'll obviously win, but if he doesn't win at least 70 percent of the vote, his handlers will have lots of spinning to do. And his relationship with the reporters who cover him, always tense, could explode at any time. Albany reporters I spoke with tend to view Cuomo as a brilliant politician but an imperious bully. He does not suffer fools, or foolish questions, gladly, and some of his criticisms of the press are on the mark; but calling reporters at home around 6:30 in the morning to berate them for "negative" stories, saying things like, "You cut off my testicle when you write that," is less press criticism than petulance. We know from the Massachusetts media's promotion of Michael Dukakis in 1987 and early 1988 that a cheerleading state press is critical in giving the native son a push. Cuomo will get that push from *The New York Times*, but the papers that aren't part of the opinion-making elite but are nevertheless important to voters might not fall into line so quickly.

And on the subject of promotion, there isn't much about New York these days that warrants a rousing cheer. Certainly there is no equivalent of the "Massachusetts miracle" for Cuomo's supporters to promote. Last spring, the Governor and legislature turned in the latest and most debt-laden budget in the history of the state. New York, with the lowest credit rating of any state but Louisiana and Massachusetts, entered its current fiscal year about \$2 billion in the red, and the accumulated deficit could climb to \$5 billion by next year. To be sure, those gloomy numbers are the result, in part, of the Reaganite withdrawal from the federalist compact. But a huge tax cut devised by Cuomo in 1987 didn't help much. The cut was originally set at \$4 billion, but over the past two years, as the red ink began to flow, Cuomo and the legislature agreed first to delay the final phase of the cut and then to raise taxes by more than \$2 billion. Even so, officials are already indicating that the deficit for fiscal year 1992, which begins next April, will be around \$1 billion. The current condition of the New York economy, both state and city, strongly suggests that happy days may not be here again come primary season.

Just as Cuomo first slashed taxes and then raised them, so in other policy matters he has sought to have it both ways. The Governor has often said that he hates labels and

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doesn't want to be called either a liberal or a conservative. Thus, he lunges in both directions, and what emerges is a moderate pragmatist who, for all his high-flown talk, seldom veers too far from the political center.

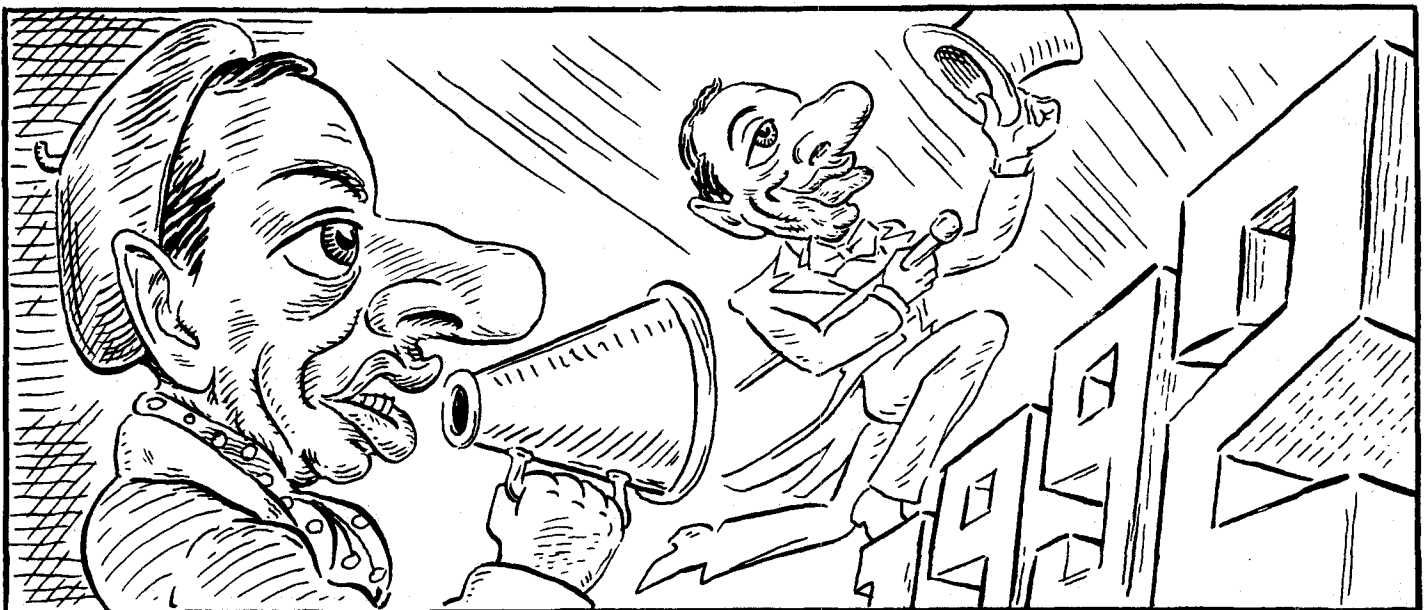
For example, Cuomo opposed the Reagan Administration's attempt to build the Shoreham nuclear plant on Long Island, citing the near impossibility of evacuating the area in case of an accident. However, he supports the construction of a naval homeport on Staten Island, arguing for the jobs it would create and maintaining that there is not nearly so great a potential for an accident on ships carrying nuclear weapons as there is at a nuclear power plant. That may be true, but it's also true that supporting the homeport constituted at least a tacit endorsement of the Reagan military buildup and the 600-ship Navy, of which the homeports were to be a strategic component. The 600-ship Navy has now been junked, of course, and even Defense Secretary Dick Cheney seems ambivalent about homeports these days. Yet Cuomo still supports the Staten Island facility, a position that washes out as rather hollow to anyone who recalls his famous San Francisco Democratic convention speech of 1984, when he chastised Republicans "because they believe we can pile missiles so high that they will pierce the clouds and the sight of them will frighten our enemies into submission."

His administration helped pass an acid-rain law and pushed through a \$1.45 billion environmental bond act in 1986 to clean up hazardous waste sites by the year 2000. But after the nice headlines that accompanied the act's passage, thirty-seven months went by before people noticed that not a bond had been issued. Finally, the administration floated \$40 million worth, less than 4 percent of the original sum. Cuomo has also supported a superhighway along Manhattan's West Side, in opposition to practically every important environmental group in the state. For years, critics of the highway plan have argued that the state could build an adequate roadway for less than half the \$800 million or so Cuomo wants to spend on it and use the balance of the money to improve mass transit and develop parkland along the Hudson River.

Cuomo announced in 1987, with great fanfare and to encomiastic headlines, that 1988-98 would be the Decade of the Child. This is meant to translate into a commitment to child nutrition, health care and schooling, one conspicuous aspect being the Liberty Scholarships, which are designed to start next year and pay college bills for poor students. So far the "Decade," in which Cuomo has invested no small amount of political credibility, has chugged in fits and starts, sometimes the legislature's fault but sometimes the Governor's: In his 1989-90 budget, he proposed a cut of \$26.1 million in the state's Division for Youth. It's perhaps too early to call the "Decade" a failure, but one would be hard pressed to find intimations of success. ("But he didn't mean this decade," goes an Albany one-liner.) Meanwhile, New York City has marked what might be termed the Summer of the Child, during which four children who lived in poor neighborhoods were accidentally killed by bullets fired through the locked doors of their apartments.

Cuomo does from time to time take courageous stands. It required a certain amount of moxie in 1984 for a Catholic politician from a fairly heavily Catholic state to go to the University of Notre Dame and expound a defense of abortion rights. His reception there was decidedly frosty, and Theodore Hesburgh, then the president of the university, rushed out a press release upbraiding Cuomo practically before he'd finished his speech. Cuomo is also the major political force against reinstitution of the death penalty in New York. Every year, the legislature passes a death penalty bill; every year, the Governor vetoes it. Every year, the State Senate overrides, and the Assembly falls one vote short of an override. On these issues, Cuomo undeniably takes political risks.

On foreign policy, the Governor hasn't said much. His first major foray into the affairs of the world was demagogic, as he teamed up with then-New Jersey Governor Thomas Kean to prevent former Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko from landing at local airports after the downing of flight KAL 007 in 1983. And at a United Jewish Appeal dinner last June, he stroked his significant Jewish



constituency in New York City by staking out a position hidebound by even the standards of local politicians: "Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir correctly refused to offer any guarantees that would limit the settlement anywhere in Israel of Jews from the Soviet Union or elsewhere. . . . [The Bush Administration] has apparently been building Yasir Arafat into their primary surrogate in the Mideast for the legitimation of a Palestinian political entity, the so-called 'Palestinian state.'"

There was also his opinion on Nicaragua, rendered in 1985, when Reaganite frothing was at fever pitch:

Jack Newfield (then a reporter at *The Village Voice*): "What about aid to the *contras*?"

Cuomo: "Nicaragua, I'm not too good, I'm no expert on foreign policy issues. And I don't like talking a lot on them. What is your question about Nicaragua?"

Newfield: "Whether you favor, either through the C.I.A. or any other agency, financial subsidies to the counter-revolutionaries in Nicaragua."

Cuomo: "I'm going to pass on that."

Then there's the Supreme Court to think about. So think about this: When Reagan nominated Antonin Scalia, Cuomo told the *New York Post* that Scalia is "an intelligent and hard-working judge, a terrific judge, and he should be confirmed immediately. I'll take on the whole Democratic party if they try anything on Scalia." Cuomo's appointments to the New York State Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, have been, like the Governor himself, largely moderate, pragmatic, progressive on a few issues (the First Amendment) but weak on others (housing and tenants' rights). An infamous recent decision held that New York City's moratorium on the demolition of single-room occupancy hotels—often the only shelter for people whose main alternative is the streets—was an unconstitutional taking of private property.

When Cuomo speaks, one could be convinced that here is a man who would spoon the country the castor oil it needs. When he thunders to a crescendo about raising taxes on the rich, or the outrages of the savings and loan scandal, he sounds as if he really means what he says and, more important, as if, once elected, he'd really *do* something to improve the sorry state of the Union. But his past behavior—the coziness with D'Amato, the huge income tax cuts, the comment on the *contras*—undercuts his oratory, leaving the fear that he is just another shopworn Democrat like Mondale and Dukakis.

Almost sixty years ago, another New York Governor ran for the White House. Franklin Roosevelt's tenure as Governor did not suggest how much he would change the direction of American politics. Perhaps Cuomo, too, would shed his tired Democratic skin once elected and start telling some basic (and unpalatable) truths. One gets the feeling, in the atmosphere of gross lies and cant that guides policy these days, that the electorate would respond strongly to such a candidate. The record suggests there is little reason for progressives to take Cuomo on faith, and so far he has yet to signal he is anything but more of the same. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Mossad's Cover Story

ART WINSLOW

One of the jokes now making the rounds in Tel Aviv goes like this: "If Victor Ostrovsky wants to visit Israel, let him disguise himself as Yasir Arafat." Ostrovsky is the former intelligence officer from the Mossad whose book, *By Way of Deception*, an exposé about his onetime employer, is quite probably the fastest-selling hardcover on earth. After touching off courtroom battles in Canada and the United States and a flurry of pugilistic prose in Israel, the book itself stands as rather less than the sum of the controversy's parts, a saucy, chatty firsthand account of being trained by the Mossad and a largely secondhand account of the agency's involvement in events of worldwide renown, which includes some spectacular allegations. Yet as a publishing "event," as the industry loves to term such things, it could serve as a paradigm of the current cultural-political-publishing complex: the public's romance with spy literature; the arrogance of power where allegations of national security are involved; the boomerang potential of state censorship; the murky legal terrain surrounding state interests in intellectual property; the chilling effect of libel suits; and the cultural spillover of America's "special relationship" with Israel.

The first public indication that the fall publishing season would include *A Devastating Insider's Portrait of the Mossad*, as the Canadian edition of *By Way of Deception* is subtitled, came from an unusual source: a court order. On September 7, a Toronto judge enjoined Stoddart Publishing Company from printing or distributing the book it had kept secret for two years, ever since Nelson Doucet, president of Stoddart's general publishing division, had acquired the rights on the basis of an outline. Victor Ostrovsky, who claimed to have been a *katsa*, or case officer, in the Mossad during the mid-1980s, was working in tandem with writer Claire Hoy, a Canadian syndicated columnist he had approached with his story in April 1988.

Doucet scheduled the book under a false name but divulged nothing of its contents, nor did he name the authors. (He refuses to comment on the advance he paid, other than to say it was "sub-

stantial but not record-breaking" by Canadian standards—an important point, for it has become a commonplace in the Israeli press that greed and revenge were Ostrovsky's prime motivations in writing the book.) In January of this year, as the manuscript was due to come in, Doucet put out a memorandum stating that "book X" had been canceled, so that all reference to it would disappear. He then went outside of Stoddart to find an editor who would work discreetly, and even took care during typesetting to split the manuscript into three parts so that no one had it in its entirety.

Doucet feels it was in the printing of the book jacket that the government of Israel found out about Ostrovsky and Hoy's work: The flap copy highlights the book's incendiary contents, blaming the Mossad for "refusing to share critical knowledge . . . leading to the death of 241 U.S. peace-keeping marines and 58 French paratroopers" and for facilitating drug smuggling and denying knowledge of the whereabouts of U.S. hostages in Lebanon.

The initial press run of 20,000 was already complete when Stoddart received a letter on September 6 from Goodman and Carr, a Canadian law firm retained by Israel, warning that Ostrovsky "on at least three separate occasions entered into written agreements . . . that he would not disclose any information which he received by virtue of his position or on the basis of his work in the Mossad." Furthermore, the letter claimed that because the information "could have dire consequences to many people and presumably many countries if it were to become public," Israel would seek an injunction. It succeeded in obtaining a ten-day ban on the book and a gag order on its authors.

Doucet said he had been waiting all along for a letter or telephone call urging him to stop publication. He had been the one who acquired the Canadian rights to Peter Wright's *Spycatcher* several years before, but he was surprised by Israel's legal action nonetheless: The British government had not let its verbal push come to a courtroom shove against Stoddart. He concedes that he knew Ostrovsky had signed a contract of confidentiality, but says the former Mossad officer never dis-

cussed the specific content of the pledge. For his part, Ostrovsky says "I had a moral dilemma. I signed a pledge when I first went into the military to uphold the state of Israel; and what's happening in that organization is bad for Israel."

With the ban imminent in Canada, attention shifted to the United States. Stoddart had intended to issue the book on October 4, in tandem with St. Martin's Press, which had purchased the U.S. rights on August 7. Now it told St. Martin's to print at will—and St. Martin's set about sending out galleys to reviewers and literary editors the very day of the clampdown in Canada. "Our original idea was to publish only in Canada and surprise everyone," Doucet said. "Then we decided to sell a few foreign rights for protection and better impact. In retrospect that was wise, because if the Americans had not fought it, and the First Amendment was not so strong, probably the book would not have been published."

St. Martin's had chosen to subtitle its edition *The Making and Unmaking of a Mossad Officer* and schedule an initial press run of 47,500. When word came of the judicial order in Canada, "we felt like going as fast as possible to get it out," said Tom McCormack, chief executive officer of St. Martin's and the one who had purchased the rights to the book. By the time the government of Israel got a judge in the United States to enjoin distribution of the book, on September 12, St. Martin's already had 17,000 copies out the door to some 1,500 locations.

The arguments before New York State Supreme Court Justice Michael Dontzin paralleled those made in Canada: that the material would "constitute a violation of various contracts and undertakings" of Ostrovsky and that St. Martin's "knew of this contractual obligation" and yet, along with co-defendant Hoy, "encouraged Ostrovsky to publish the book." In addition, dissemination of the book "would pose a grave threat of irreparable—indeed, mortal—injury to persons employed by the State of Israel and their families, and will irreparably damage the national security of the State of Israel, and, in turn, the national security of the United States and relations between [the] two countries." This action was the first instance in which a foreign power managed to effect prior restraint in U.S. publishing, and it lasted some thirty-nine hours, until the afternoon of September 13, when a four-member panel

of the Appellate Court, citing the Pentagon Papers case and saying Israel could not substantiate its claims, struck it down. In the confusion, the book remained mostly unavailable until Monday, September 17, when Israel's lawyers withdrew their bid to keep the book off the shelves in Canada as well.

As might have been expected, this made the Mossad look very much like the Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight: It, or the state with its probable assent, set out to kill a book and apparently shot itself in the foot. This prompted observations that Israel did for Ostrovsky and his co-author what the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini did for Salman Rushdie and *The Satanic Verses*. Yet if that is true in more than one sense—Ostrovsky may be forced to live a guarded life, if not actually hide out, Rushdie-style—a more apt comparison is with Wright's *Spycatcher*. After the British government's widely publicized opposition to that book, Stoddart sold 132,000 copies in hardcover. Two weeks after the judicial restraint on *By Way of Deception* had been dropped, Stoddart was at a press run of 60,000 and St. Martin's was at 350,000. One lesson should have been evident from the start: Censorship sells.

Left unresolved in the wake of the injunctions is the second matter in the court filings: Israel's assertion that the contents of the book are largely its property, and that any profits should be funneled its way. John Lerner, an attorney working on the case for Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, the firm retained by Israel, says, "As far as I know, it [Israel] intends to remove the profitability from this kind of undertaking in the future," and that the Israeli government is currently "examining its options," which could include some action other than the "constructive trust" that it has asked be made for it from the book's profits.

David Kaye, general counsel for St. Martin's, says he "assumes the motives are punitive," an attempt to make it cost more to defend the book than it could possibly earn, thus warning off publishers from what is now a small but high-selling genre. He deems Israel's proprietary presumptions "frivolous" and says "we will certainly make it plain that they have no claim against St. Martin's whatsoever" if Israel decides to press the matter.

Israel itself appears caught in a classic double bind in its assertions about *By Way of Deception*: It would have us believe the book is truthful enough to be a

great danger and a security risk, yet at the same time labels it full of falsehood. Ostrovsky, for instance, thought he would have trouble proving that he had worked for the Institute of Intelligence and Special Functions for Israel, as the Mossad is properly named. Yet Israel admitted that in its court filings, saying this was so from December 30, 1984, to March 9, 1986. Ostrovsky wrote that he started training in January of 1983 but was first welcomed to the Mossad academy in February of 1984.

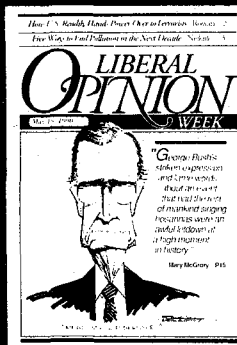
These dates could be significant in the context of the book and its content. One of the claims Ostrovsky makes, a politically explosive charge, is that Israeli intelligence had knowledge that in the summer of 1983, "a large Mercedes truck" was being readied with "even larger than usual spaces" for bombs. "Now, the Mossad knew that, for size, there were only a few logical targets, one of which must be the U.S. compound" in Beirut.

Israel did not pass this intelligence on, if indeed it ever had it. Ostrovsky says that was because Nahum Admony, then head of the Mossad, proclaimed the Israelis were "not there to protect Americans. They're a big country." The Israeli government, which otherwise will not comment on the Ostrovsky and Hoy book, has issued a stinging rebuttal of this charge, through Avi Pazner, speaking for Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. Citing Ostrovsky's motive as "revenge" (he left the Mossad under ambiguous circumstances), Pazner termed it a "contemptible and spurious accusation that Israel had prior information," and added that a special investigation has just been conducted that "unequivocally and authoritatively reaffirmed that this charge is unfounded."

Much of what Ostrovsky relates in his book did not happen in front of him. He says he knows details of the events "because we studied them, going back and forth in the computers; most of the book is about case studies, from the files." Otherwise, he says he "heard it, because a lot of information flows back and forth freely" in conversations over lunch or drinks. The bombing of the marine compound took place in October 1983; if Ostrovsky was in the Mossad facilities not long afterward, as he claims, it is far likelier that such loose talk still floated through the corridors than if he were there fourteen months later, as Israel's court papers suggest.

St. Martin's and Stoddart did exercise caution in at least one instance to insure

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that Ostrovsky's "loose lips" information did not sink their ships: They cut his original assertion that there was high-level Israeli foreknowledge and approval of the Phalangist massacres of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon in 1982, a claim resembling the one that landed *Time* in court defending a libel charge by Ariel Sharon, who was successful in forcing the magazine to print a correction. At St. Martin's, McCormack says that when the firm's lawyers called him to flag the problematic passages, Ostrovsky was unreachable (he went underground briefly after the Canadian ban was imposed) and so wasn't consulted when the material was excised; Stoddart's lawyers, who conferred with their U.S. counterparts, had reached the same decision.

Ostrovsky, in retrospect, concedes that he would have been unable to document the deleted passages, something no doubt characteristic of many parts of his book. Determining whether a grain of salt or something more of the shaker is required is thus difficult. Dan Raviv and Yossi Melman's *Every Spy a Prince* (Houghton Mifflin), another recent book about the Mossad, looks like good reportage when compared with *By Way of Deception*. But the fact that information in the former is verifiable hardly means that the latter is untrue. One could take the extreme vilification of Ostrovsky in Israel, which he maintains is deliberately orchestrated, to be either outrage at calumny or a sign that the truth hurts.

Sentiments like those of the well-known writer Nahum Barnea, expressed in the September 16 *Yediot Aharonot*, have been most common: "The first thing that came to mind was that someone should fire a bullet into Victor Ostrovsky's head." His second thought was that it would be better to kidnap the former intelligence officer and return him to Israel for his comeuppance. On September 19, a small handwritten box appeared addressed to Ostrovsky in another large paper, *Ma'ariv*, intimating that "Cindy" would soon visit him. Cindy, as every adult in Israel knows, is the name of the woman used to trap Mordechai Vanunu when he was kidnapped from Rome and returned to Israel to stand trial for revealing secrets about Dimona, its top-secret nuclear facility.

Ostrovsky doesn't dwell on Dimona, but he does drop many nonnuclear bombshells. His accounts on the Beirut truck bomb, Mossad operatives in the United States, and intelligence on the where-

abouts of U.S. hostages have been widely reported. Passing mostly unremarked have been sections on Israel's purported use of kangaroo courts to try enemies in absentia for inclusion on an assassination list that is approved by the Prime Minister; on the sex habits of the Mossad's top brass (Ostrovsky holds that the personal material incited the most rage); on Mossad's depiction of Yasir Arafat as a homosexual and Adnan Khashoggi as one of its recruits; on Andrew Young and Yitzhak Rabin as targets for dirty tricks; and on the Iran/*contra* scandal.

The question of just why the state of Israel should have attempted to stop this book, when the chance of succeeding must have been recognized as slimmer than Shamir's majority in the Knesset, is hotly debated. Ostrovsky, Doucet and

McCormack incline to the view that Israel discovered the book's existence just prior to publication and panicked. Writing in *The Jerusalem Post*, Arye Noar, a former Cabinet member, excoriated Shamir and the Mossad chief for the decision, saying they had put their heads together and "behaved like beginners"; but he laid the real blame on the lack of "an orderly decision-making process" at the top echelons in Israel. The more conspiratorially minded might even propose that Mossad will profit, one way or another, from having the portrayal of it in this book become the dominant view—*Spycatcher* was out there as ample evidence of what a little suppression would do, after all, and Ostrovsky took his title from an interesting Mossad motto: "By way of deception, thou shalt do war." □

The Lenore Marshall/Nation Poetry Prize—1990

The Lenore Marshall/Nation Poetry Prize of \$10,000, awarded annually for the most outstanding book of poems published in the United States by an American, is sponsored by the New Hope Foundation in conjunction with The Nation. Previous winners of the prize have been Thomas McGrath (1989), Josephine Jacobsen (1988), Donald Hall (1987), Howard Moss (1986), John Ashbery (1985), Josephine Miles (1984), George Starbuck (1983), John Logan (1982), Sterling A. Brown (1981), Stanley Kunitz (1980), Hayden Carruth (1979), Allen Tate (1978), Philip Levine (1977), Denise Levertov (1976) and Cid Corman (1975).

*This year the prize has been awarded to Michael Ryan for his book *God Hunger* (Viking Penguin). The judges were Sydney Lea, Liz Rosenberg and William H. Pritchard, who contributed the accompanying essay.*

Michael Ryan's three books of poetry have followed one another at a fairly deliberate pace. His first one, *Threats Instead of Trees* (1974), was a Yale Younger Poets selection; *In Winter* (1981) was chosen as a volume in the National Poetry Series; now our panel of judges has awarded *God Hunger* (1989) the Lenore Marshall/Nation Poetry Prize. Unlike too many poets who tumble into print at the first twitch of feeling, Ryan takes time to listen to himself, and such listening contributes immeasurably to the subtlety of his address to the reader. In the opening of the first poem in *God Hunger*, "Not the End of the World," a note is struck that will be heard more than once in this book:

What flew down the chimney
into the cold wood stove

in my study? Wings
alive inside cast iron
gave the cold stove a soul
wilder than fire, in trouble.
I knocked the window-screen out
with a hand-heel's thump,
and dropped the shade over
the top half of the window,
and shut the study door,
and wadded the keyhole,
hoping whatever it was
would fly for the light,
the full, clean stream of light
like the sliding board from heaven
our guardian angels slid to earth on
in *The Little Catholic Messenger*. . .

Something like "the sound of sense" (Robert Frost's phrase) can be experienced in these rhythms, while the poem's protagonist comes across as humanly sound, a person of thoughtful good sense in his procedures to assist the "dull brown bird no bigger than my fist" which soon

hops "modestly" out of the stove. Although, as in almost all of Ryan's poems, the style of address is rather soberly couched, that address is not without wit—as in the momentary glance at "the sliding board from heaven" remembered from what I take to have been a magazine for good Catholic children.

There is very little, however, in Ryan's two earlier books that prepares one for the flexibility and variety of speech found in the new poems—although there were hints of those qualities in the last two sections of *In Winter*. By contrast with the somewhat toneless voice that permeates so much of Ryan's previous work, the prevailing tone in *God Hunger* is very much a *speaking* one, and at times it becomes downright virtuosic in the attempt to create its breathing space. Consider the final, attractively tortuous sentence of "Pedestrian Pastoral":

But I do walk
happily in this mild Virginia winter
unable to feel absolutely sure
I won't be here forever
almost like this, a pure observer,
for once oblivious

to the spurs of ego and desire
that—whatever death is
or is not—could be paradise
to finally do without.

This "pastoral" impulse, found in a number of the poems, is another way of naming what the book's title has in view. Robert Pinsky calls it, in a comment on the dust jacket, "the unfillable craving people feel for some generosity of meaning beyond the circumstances of the self." That craving, in "Not the End of the World," may be toward restoring a wounded bird to some of its lost freedom of flight; or, in "Pedestrian Pastoral," a momentary experience of a freedom and purity beyond finite human constraints. Or, in "Crossroads Inn" (first printed in this magazine), it is the impulse to reach back into history for confirmation of something altogether larger than and rightfully humbling of the single individual. In "Crossroads Inn" a man contemplating the hills of Virginia (Ryan has lived in Virginia) has something turn in his mind as he looks at the road below him and thinks that

two hundred years ago,
needing rest and company,
a drover walking livestock
to a nearby river port
stopped here overnight
and in the evening sat on this rock

thinking *What will be here
two hundred years from now
and the surging hills answered
Nothing that you know.*

This sudden surge of feeling in the poem is beautifully engendered by those answering hills with their eternal lack of consolation.

It would be a mistake, though, to see Ryan as mainly a locked-in sensibility, brooding upon himself and the infinite. Much of the vagueness and surreal atmosphere that characterize his earlier poems have been replaced, in the new volume, by a sharper, more dramatic sense of situation and—along with it—a more poised tone. Accordingly, the sense that our life is on the whole a pretty grim business (a sense there from the start in Ryan's verse) is less portentously stated than it is thoroughly articulated within a particular poem's texture. The shocks and brutal changes composing the ill flesh is heir to are rendered powerfully in poems placed near each other early in this book, like "Winter Drought" (about a suicide) or "Meeting Cheever" (with the striking line, "Brilliant John Cheever is a handful of ash") or the painfully graphic "TV Room at the Children's Hospice." What's most interesting about these poems is that Ryan finds himself calling upon the uses of rhyme and stanza unit even as his chosen subjects become more harsh and intractable. In "Boy 'Carrying-In' Bottles in Glass Works" both rhyme and stanza are employed to create a figure at least partially adequate to the great piercing detail from Lewis W. Hine's photograph of the child laborer looking out at us with eyes that have seen it all:

What makes his face heartbreaking
is that he wouldn't have it so—
just one of many boys working
amid splinters of glass that throw
such light they seem its only source
in this dusky photograph.
A random instant of the past.
And the brutal factory, of course,
is only one memory of brutality
on the world's infinite list.

So it begins, and continues with rhymes that enhance rather than impede fluidity by never insisting on themselves, as if they were discovered by an artistry that need not pause to admire its particular effects. In the past, Ryan's prevailing vice was solemnity, or rather a tendency to confuse the merely solemn with the truly serious. *God Hunger*, by caring more about the minute particulars Blake said all experience consists in, also manages to care more tellingly about the larger,

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frequently sad, truths that must be drawn from life.

But the life from which these truths are drawn, for all its sadness, has vitality and a tough staying power that impels the poet to make a story out of it. These poems have beginnings, middles and ends; they are the product of a strong narrative impulse that shows the storyteller caught up in the intransigent otherness of his subjects, like the girl turning herself into a sex object in "Portrait of a Lady":

Was it only the new old chemical
stirrings
that made her shoplift purple
corduroys
and squeeze into them out of her
mother's hearing
to discover what noises could come
from boys?
"Like sleepwalking on stilts," she
laughed years later
about the cheap spiked heels
wobbling under her feet.
The lip-smacks and wolf-whistles she
remembered
as fainter than the slamming of her
own heartbeat
when she appeared to herself in the
overlit mirror
that Saturday afternoon in the
shopping mall john.
All the stoned girls quit primping
and stared.
And time stopped. Then one stuck out
her tongue.

This is the beginning of a tale about an adventurer who soon declines into a mere wife and mother, and the tale is told without condescension or the pitying superiority of "understanding." In the book's longest (and strangest) poem, "A Burglary," Ryan's narrative interest seizes upon a typewriter and stereo stolen out of his Yaddo studio in order to explore, in vividly idiomatic language, some ramifying events and troubling questions.

In his comments about *God Hunger*, Robert Pinsky quoted William Carlos Williams's famous words about how "it is difficult/ to get the news from poems" but how very much we stand in need of that news. In Michael Ryan's poetry the news issues from a human being with a history who lives in a country we can recognize as contemporary America, filled with furniture from our own lives and speech heard over our individual airwaves. The book reminds us on every page that poems can be about lives, and about them in ways most urgent and delicate; such is the challenge set for itself, and impressively met, by *God Hunger*.

WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD

TV ROOM AT THE CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

Red-and-green leather-helmeted
maniacally grinning motorcyclists
crash at all angles
on Lev Smith's pajama top

and when his chocolate ice cream
dumps like a mud slide down its front
he smiles, not maniacally, still nauseous
from chemotherapy and bald already.

Lev is six but sat still four hours
all afternoon with IVs in his arms,
his grandma tells everyone. Marcie
is nine and was born with no face.

One profile has been built in increments
with surgical plastic and skin grafts
and the other looks like fudge.
Tomorrow she's having an eye moved.

She finds a hand-mirror in the toy box
and maybe for the minute I watch
she sees nothing she doesn't expect.
Ruth Borthnott's son, Richard,

cracked his second vertebra
at diving practice eight weeks ago,
and as Ruth describes getting the news
by telephone (shampoo suds plopped

all over the notepad she tried
to write on) she smiles like Lev Smith
at his ice cream, smiles also saying
Richard's on a breathing machine,

if he makes it he'll be quadriplegic,
she's there in intensive care every day
at dawn. The gameshow-shrill details
of a Hawaiian vacation for two

and surf teasing the ankles
of the couple on a moonlit beachwalk
keep drawing her attention
away from our conversation.

I say it's amazing how life can change
from one second to the next,
and with no apparent disdain
for this dismal platitude,

she nods yes, and yes again
at the gameshow's svelte assistant
petting a dinette set, and yes
to Lev Smith's grandma

who has appeared beside her
with microwaved popcorn
blooming like a huge
cauliflower from its tin.

PEDESTRIAN PASTORAL

It's nothing to a squirrel
to vault ten times its pulsing length
and come down running on a branch
thin as a popsicle,

and much less to a groundhog
flattened by a tire
to hold one perfect paw in air
as if summoning a partner,

and this unexpectedly gorgeous
shaggy white cow, inexplicably
alone in a pasture—
what is it to her this December

if at her black nose breath-puffs
vanish and appear like a Don't Walk
warning blinker? But I do walk
happily in this mild Virginia winter

unable to feel absolutely sure
I won't be here forever
almost like this, a pure observer,
for once oblivious

to the spurs of ego and desire
that—whatever death is
or is not—could be paradise
to finally do without.

"BOY 'CARRYING-IN' BOTTLES IN GLASS WORKS"

West Virginia, 1911
Photograph by Lewis W. Hine

What makes his face heartbreaking
is that he wouldn't have it so—
just one of many boys working
amid splinters of glass that throw
such light they seem its only source
in this dusky photograph.
A random instant of the past.
And the brutal factory, of course,

is only one memory of brutality
on the world's infinite list.
The boy would now be over eighty,
retired, unnoticed,
but surely he was stunted and is dead.
It's this look of his—
like a word almost said—
across an unchartable distance,

that shapes and bends
emotion toward him now,
though he wouldn't have it so.
He just looked into a lens
amid splinters of glass that throw
such light they seem its only source,
and rods and chutes that criss-cross
like some malign, unnameable force.

© 1989 by Michael Ryan

Singing for Her Life

LESLIE BERMAN

FIRE IN THE RAIN . . . SINGER IN THE STORM: An Autobiography. By *Holly Near*, with *Derk Richardson*. Morrow. 290 pp. \$19.95.

Cycling around in time and place from Nova Scotia on New Year's Day, 1984, the year in which she believed she "was supposed to die," to an uneven and overly sentimental account of her pastoral California childhood, Holly Near opens her premature autobiography as she means to go on, touching capriciously on events and relationships that hint at, rather than illuminate, the origins and progress of the theatrical, musical, political and personal pilgrimage that's made her one of the left's most prominent cultural workers.

Roles in the Broadway production of *Hair*, the film *Slaughterhouse Five*, and an appearance on *The Partridge Family* sitcom are each granted an underexposed incidental remembrance, and Near mentions her one-night stand with Don Johnson (during the filming of *The Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart* in 1969). Photo captions suffice to cover celebrity friends and acquaintances like Vladimir Pozner, Raul Julia, and Jill Eikenberry and Michael Tucker (of *L.A. Law*), while the index traverses anecdotal foils such as Kevin Bacon, Johnny Bench and Linda Ronstadt.

Which is a shame, because in her 40 years Near has sustained much more than close encounters with charismatic people and causes, and, when speaking informally, has more to say about them. Following her initiation as a political performer on the Jane Fonda and Donald Sutherland "Free the Army" show, Near's fledgling acting career was virtually shelved in favor of concert tours featuring her newly written songs of social comment. Those raw, anthemic tunes, performed to the spare piano accompaniment provided by her high school chum Jeff Langley, became an independently financed album, *Hang in There*, the first of fourteen discs she would produce for her own Redwood Records label. Benefit concerts and public appearances spawned others—not only did Near grad-

Leslie Berman is a recently retired music critic who is now studying law. She is completing an oral history of women's music.

uate from church basements and coffeehouses to Carnegie Hall, filling her calendar with more than 150 events in one year, but she included marches among them, and wrote and sang songs for peace ("No More Genocide in My Name"), against nukes ("Power") and for lesbian and gay pride ("Singing for Our Lives"), rallying millions.

After making public her relationship with lesbian singer-songwriter Meg Christian in the late 1970s and releasing *Imagine My Surprise*, an album of songs about and for women, Near focused her work on feminist issues, turning Redwood into a lesbian feminist collective. She distributed albums by other women performers and supported a growing underground women's music network with her presence as one of its foremothers. Near also added to her performances sign-language interpretation for deaf audience members. She's been more instrumental than any other performer in making women's music—a marginalized lesbian feminist cultural form—accessible to the left mainstream. She's urged and achieved shaky coalitions among diverse dogmatic and separatist audiences. And she's served as an underpaid fundraiser for a host of contemporary good works (bringing in, by a rough in-house count, nearly \$10 million in fifteen years before her record company became the nonprofit Redwood Cultural Work in 1988). All of which she did while making spirited and sassy albums performed and recorded with increasing sophistication (and the help of many talented musicians), encompassing a variety of styles, from naïve folkie to savvy chanteuse. (There is, unfortunately, very little about the music itself in this singer's autobiography.)

Over the years as Holly Near's music has come to me, I've found myself equally enthralled and infuriated. Her musical theater style is appealing when she's covering standards or flirting with her fans, but it's too soppy by rock and folk standards to carry biting political material effectively. Artificial by their very nature, Near's alternately belting and crooning vocalizations are, at their heart, sweet. Too sweet for the sneer of parody, insufficiently nuanced for sarcasm and too tender for irony. But after I read the book, I listened to all of Near's records and found I was moved once again by the power of "It Could Have Been Me," which she wrote for a 1974 memorial vigil

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at Kent State. Over the years Near has updated the verses, moving from Victor Jara to Karen Silkwood and Nicaragua and El Salvador. On *A Live Album*, Near sings this song a cappella until the last chorus, when the joining of bass, piano and the audience brings a cathartic exultation that is almost religious. In the song's chorus, Near forges the crux of her philosophy: "It could have been me but instead it was you/So I'll keep doing the work you were doing as if I were two/I'll be a student of life, a singer of songs/A farmer of food and the righter of wrongs." Via Bernice Johnson Reagon's lyric, "We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes," Near updates that philosophy on her newest release, *Singer in the Storm* (her first album on the commercial Chameleon Records label); digging earnestly to find new responses to old questions, she has converted me once again.

But as inspiration, or even as documentation of her successes, *Fire in the Rain* . . . *Singer in the Storm* leaves too much to the reader's imagination. And there are too many poetic moments and lyric quotes sandwiched between stiffly instructive musings on the political resonance of ordinary actions. Two different books vie for space here, and neither is fully realized. When I interviewed Near recently she admitted that when she worked on the book she censored her more imaginative writing as too self-indulgent, while muting her political bite to avoid alienating the general reader. But she left out more than that. In stripping down events and political monologues to sound bites while adopting an awkwardly impersonal tone, Near has left the book she could have written in the outtakes. Here's a conversationally rambling yet cogent sample response by Near in our one-on-one:

I would like to, through my music, or acting, or teaching, or writing, now, constantly challenge myself to see whether through this form I can inspire, heal, educate, challenge, question and entertain. . . . You can do all those other things but if . . . people aren't entertained, it will limit who will listen. . . . I don't think performing is a natural phenomenon. I don't think you can be yourself on stage. If I just went up [and was myself] it would be too small . . . so you figure out how do you make the person that's sitting in the front row and the last row of Carnegie Hall think that they're in your living room. And that becomes a craft. . . . Art is manipulative. And if you pretend it's not because you think manipulation is a crude form, then you miss the boat as an entertainer or public speaker. Once you own the fact that you are manipulating people you are going to learn how to do it well. Why does some-

one want to come and cry a little when they can cry a lot? Let's give ourselves the big cry, let's give ourselves the big rage, let's give ourselves the big joy. . . . You [must] also acknowledge the fact that their presence next to one another is as important as their presence in relationship to the person on stage . . . and everybody goes home having had a major experience. Who knows what becomes of it? Those people go out in the world, they effect change, that change affects me, it affects the song I write which I turn around and sing to them. I just think that's a hell of a lot of fun.

Any one of those threads would have been worth following up, with stories and ruminations, with examples and analysis. That's the Near worth listening to—humorous, self-aware, open, analytical, purposeful. Too bad there's so little of that Holly Near in this book. □

Tales of the New West

SARAH J. STAGE

RELATIONS OF RESCUE: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939. By Peggy Pascoe. Oxford University Press. 301 pp. \$29.95.

Western history is not what it used to be. Gone is the saga of the taming of the West (an ethnocentric concept if ever there was one), and with it the horse operas of cowboys and Indians, redolent of sagebrush and exuding optimism. The myths of the American West are, one by one, being picked off by a group of young historians who judge them to be as full of bunk as the moonlight-and-magnolias rendition of the Old South. Even Frederick Jackson Turner, who argued for the unique legacy of America's frontier, has fallen out of vogue. "We don't use the 'F' word anymore," jokes Patricia Nelson Limerick, one of the leading exponents of the new Western history.

For years Western history was overwhelmingly by and about men. When women figured in it at all, they were cast as "gentle tamers" who brought the mixed blessings of civilization to the frontier, or as women of ill repute who

populated the dance halls and brothels of Western boom towns. Peggy Pascoe, an up-and-comer in what may be the most exciting field in U.S. history—the intersection between the new Western history and the developing field of women's history—takes us beyond the old stereotypes. Her insights into the ways the study of gender can complement Western history underscore a point she raised at the Berkshire Conference on Women's History at Rutgers last June. "As the most multiracial region of the country," Pascoe argued, "the American West offers historians of women an ideal place to explore theoretical questions of gender, race and intercultural relations."

Relations of Rescue traces the activities of Protestant women in the West and their quest for female moral authority. In the nineteenth century, female moral authority, as Pascoe defines it, found its basis in the belief that women were inherently more pious and pure than men. In the West, white middle-class women confronted an overwhelmingly masculine environment. Armed with a distinct set of women's values, they sought to "rescue" the victims of male abuse by establishing mission homes.

Pascoe looks at a mission home for Chinese prostitutes in San Francisco, a government-sponsored shelter for polygamous Mormon wives in Salt Lake City, a cottage home for unwed mothers in Denver and a program for Native Americans on the Omaha Reservation in Ne-

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Sarah J. Stage, associate professor of history at the University of California, Riverside, is at work on a book on women reformers in the Progressive era.

braska. Home missionary organizations like these claimed more members than any other women's organizations in the country from 1870 to 1900, larger even than the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and much larger than the nascent suffrage groups. Far from being apolitical, mission women mounted a potent critique of male privilege. Using sensational images of victimized women, they lashed out at male sexual license and attacked the patriarchal family.

Pascoe adopts a dual focus, looking at the relations between the women home missionaries and the male society they challenged, and those between the Protestant women and the women they sheltered. Instead of confronting male authority, the women reformers ended up imposing their views on the women they rescued. Yet Pascoe shows how gender constituted a significant component in the relations of rescue, a component social historians have largely overlooked in their preoccupation with class and social control. She finds that Protestant mission women were less likely than their male counterparts to subscribe to biological racial determinism. The ideology of female moral authority, with its emphasis on the bonds uniting women, challenged racial determinism. Mission women stressed the importance of social environment and promoted education and training. Members of the Connecticut Indian Association raised money to educate Susan LaFlesche, the first Native American woman physician in the United States.

For their part, the women who were "rescued," as Pascoe demonstrates in a brilliantly argued section, used the rhetoric of female moral authority to further their own ends. Chin Leen, for example, escaped from an unhappy marriage by allowing herself to be rescued by women from the Chinese mission home. Unwed mothers in Denver found shelter and medical care at the cottage home, away from the frightening intolerance of their working-class communities. Women who entered the homes had their own reasons, which had little to do with the ideology of Christian womanhood. Only a very few ethnic minority women attempted to become exemplars of Victorian female virtues.

Pascoe's closely argued, if sometimes bloodless, analysis of "woman's work for woman" in the West is as timely as it is provocative. She warns that before we rush to embrace the current cultural feminism, with its notion that women have

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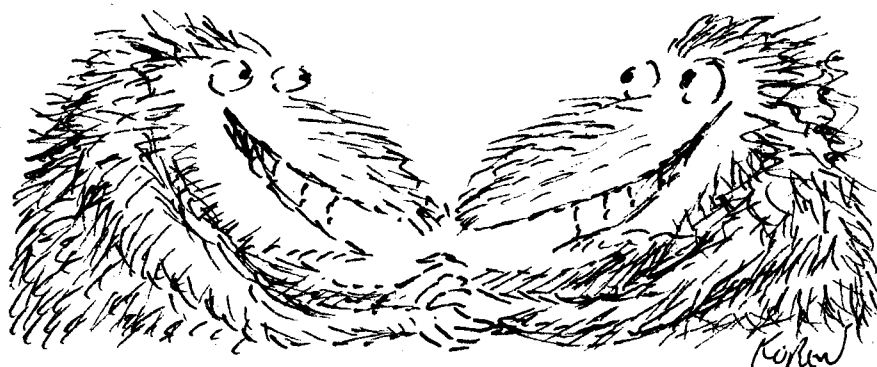
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distinct values that make them better and more able than men, we would do well to look at what happened to the quest for female moral authority in the West. Ultimately, it was undone by its very willingness to accept a static view of female nature, to adopt rather than to challenge entrenched gender definitions.

In the early twentieth century, modernism both undermined notions of female piety and purity and dealt a death blow to the ideology of female moral authority preached by home missionary women. One might argue that the mission women constituted only a small part of a larger quest for female moral authority, one that gained power in the Progressive era and drew upon a set of

values more enduring than piety and purity. Pascoe nevertheless offers a compelling caution to the corrective of cultural feminism. By focusing attention on power as well as promise, she reminds us that women's culture runs the risk of concentrating too much on the female values at its center, drawing attention away from the power relations at its boundaries.

"Exclude women from Western history, and unreality sets in," Limerick once observed. "Restore them, and the Western drama gains a fully human cast of characters—males and females, whose urges, needs, failings, and conflicts we can recognize and even share." Peggy Pascoe's *Relations of Rescue* marks a fulfillment of Limerick's prophecy. □

Love Labor's Lost

FRED INGLIS

THE TIME OF MY LIFE. By Denis Healey. Norton. 607 pp. \$29.95.

For forty-five years Denis Healey opposed the ghastly simulacrum of socialism on the other side of the Iron Curtain at the same time as he has stood for practical care and solid mutuality—the provision of decent houses and hospitals open to anybody, regardless of income—combined with an intelligent application of Keynesianism to a national economy, which is the best tradition of the British Labor Party in spite of itself. And today, as the sun sets on the Soviet and American empires alike, and, one devoutly hopes, as the lights also go down on Margaret Thatcher's debauched and vulgar charivari, it may be that this Labor tradition will have its day again and even be well received by the relevant offices in Washington.

Healey's autobiography has been a rousing success in Britain: Well over 60,000 copies sold before May of this year in an expensive cloth edition with an awful photograph of him on the dust jacket. This reception bears witness to the popularity of a man who has transcended the popular caricature of party politician and come to occupy a singular social category he constructed all for himself—a mixture of sage public figure, vaudeville comedian and competent pianist, victorious light heavyweight of parliamentary

pugilism, capacious and accessible human being. He has become one of those rare politicians greeted with open affection in the streets. Senior generals liked him. So did the tough eggs of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. The only people I know who hated him were the nasty and ignorant right of Thatcher's Tory toadies, and the correspondingly cuckoo neo-Stalinists of the municipal left, always on the lookout for the class traitor.

There is something in all this, I think, of admiration for a man vastly more clever and gifted than his rivals and enemies who missed the prime ministership and party leadership that were his due. Never did he fall into the rancor and touchiness that have so disfigured Ted Heath's later years. With the agreeable self-mockery that is one of Healey's qualities, he prophesied that he would become the Gromyko of the Labor Party, and he did so with a caustic wit and a robust intolerance of his party's self-mutilating excesses. The joke brings out something of his egocentricity, although in his case with an ego really worth the name. His book specifies a few of his mistakes candidly enough, but it is unremittingly self-referential for all that.

Perhaps it is a bit hard to reproach an autobiography for putting quite so much stress on the first-person pronoun. But Healey lived in the very eye of the storm winds of cold war, junior no doubt to the grand secretaries—McNamara, Kissinger—whom he calls friends (and Healey never ratted on a friend), and was always assiduous in keeping the Iron Curtain free from rust. He was an Atlanticist and

Fred Inglis is professor of education at the University of Warwick, England.

a cold warrior for his entire political career and is entirely unapologetic about it. Nonetheless, his account of these things somehow fails to bring out their momentousness for our lives. An autobiography has force insofar as it marks the point at which the great currents of history sweep into the personal lives of the powerful and there take their peculiar, detailed and recognizable form.

One way of putting this misgiving is to say that Healey's book doesn't live up to its neat title. There is not enough of *art* in it. It is as if, on deciding (as he has) that he would retire from Parliament at the next election, he set himself garrulously to retell all the anecdotes of which his life's notebooks reminded him. So the story, often gripping but not without its *longueurs*, comes along rather simply as just one damn thing after another. If it lacks the passages of stately reflection or searching thought that mark the great autobiographies, however, it also lacks the horrible self-justification, arrogant infallibility and spiteful paying off of scores which make the genre so repulsive in the hands of the State Department and White House ex-mighty. Healey is extremely cultivated and he takes the risk—always liable to blow up under the autobiographer's feet—of larding his pages with quotations from his favorite poets, especially Yeats and Auden. The quotations suggest a sentimental education, and the trick is a triumph.

There is an excellent line of Roethke's he might have used: "The right thing happens to the happy man." Disappointments notwithstanding, Healey is such a man. He freely admits what one is not supposed to say, that the time of his life was his wartime service, and he vividly describes the moment in 1945 when the war in Europe ended, and the push of great armies disintegrated into a rabble of refugees and defeated enemy soldiers trying to avoid the vengeance both of their deadliest foes and their former allies.

Somewhere in that crowded, scary and exhilarating experience is an image of Healey's politics. He took it with him to the offices of the Labor Party, where he worked with Ernie Bevin until 1951 for 7 quid a week. He took it in 1964 to the Ministry of Defense, which he ran on classic Laborist lines, protecting the wages and equipment of the men and women he was responsible for, edging a few more (including Louis Mountbatten) into retirement every year as, not without an imperialist pang, he brought the soldiers home from beyond Suez and low-

ered the Union Jack on the Far Eastern redoubts.

He even took his cheerful, comradely politics to the cheerless, viperish and uncomradely politics of the Labor Party's conferences after 1979, when it lost office, and he bore its vilifications with his own line in anger and contempt. If these have been barren years for Healey, he has showed no sign of it, delighting in the company of his beloved and trenchant wife, keeping faith with his party against the blandishments of its vainglorious secessionists.

I suppose his historical significance to

Americans was his conception of his duty as keeping in place and under control the minimum apparatus of cold war. He spoke up with George Kennan in 1957 for getting the troops out of Germany, and with McNamara ten years later for unplugging the tripwire of retaliatory policy. But as everyone now knows, smaller weapons only made things worse, and Healey was inexcusably scornful of that great surge of Continentwide popular feeling against cold war dogmas and their arbitrary domination by the bloody missiles. Angered by the invincible self-righteousness of peace puritans, he did



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nothing to give that healthy torrent of feeling direction and purpose. He knew how much there was to say against NATO and U.S. policy. He should have done something.

Maybe it was too much for a Bevin boy. Maybe he was past it, though he doesn't sound in these pages as though he's past anything. But the best valediction this Englishman can find to wish Healey's book well is, typically, a quotation found for him by the author himself, and taken from Leszek Kolakowski, writing at the heart of the dark old European cockpit in Poland.

Democratic Socialism . . . is an obstinate will to erode by inches the conditions which produce avoidable suffering, oppression, hunger, wars, racial and national hatred, insatiable greed and vindictive envy.

In that vision there are the necessary and sufficient terms of a good life and, if need be, a hard death. Healey has lived up to it. □

LETTERS.

(Continued From Page 438)

Ruse" [Aug. 13/20] to "right-wing fantasies of P.O.W.s alive in the jungles." I don't mind being accused of harboring "fantasies," but please do not call me "right-wing."

Lawrence Hagerty

AUTHOR'S QUERY

For a book on the six-year Nicaraguan civil war (1982-88), I would appreciate hearing from readers who were there and actually observed battles between *contras* and Sandinistas. I am particularly interested in the battle of Siuna (December 1987), the numerous battles for Jalapa (1982) and the Quilali Massacre (January 1988).

Sue Hayes
P.O. Box 371102
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CORRECTIONS

Due to an editorial error in Diana R. Gordon's October 8 article, "Executioners' Songs," the Supreme Court decision establishing the right to counsel was misidentified. It was *Gideon v. Wainwright*.

It was the Boston Symphony Orchestra, not the Boston Pops, that canceled a 1982 performance by Vanessa Redgrave after she made pro-Palestinian statements. The editorial error appeared in Paul Mattick Jr.'s October 1 article, "Arts and the State."

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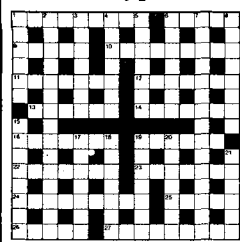
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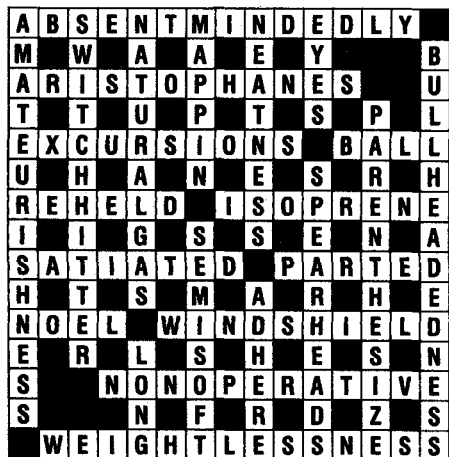
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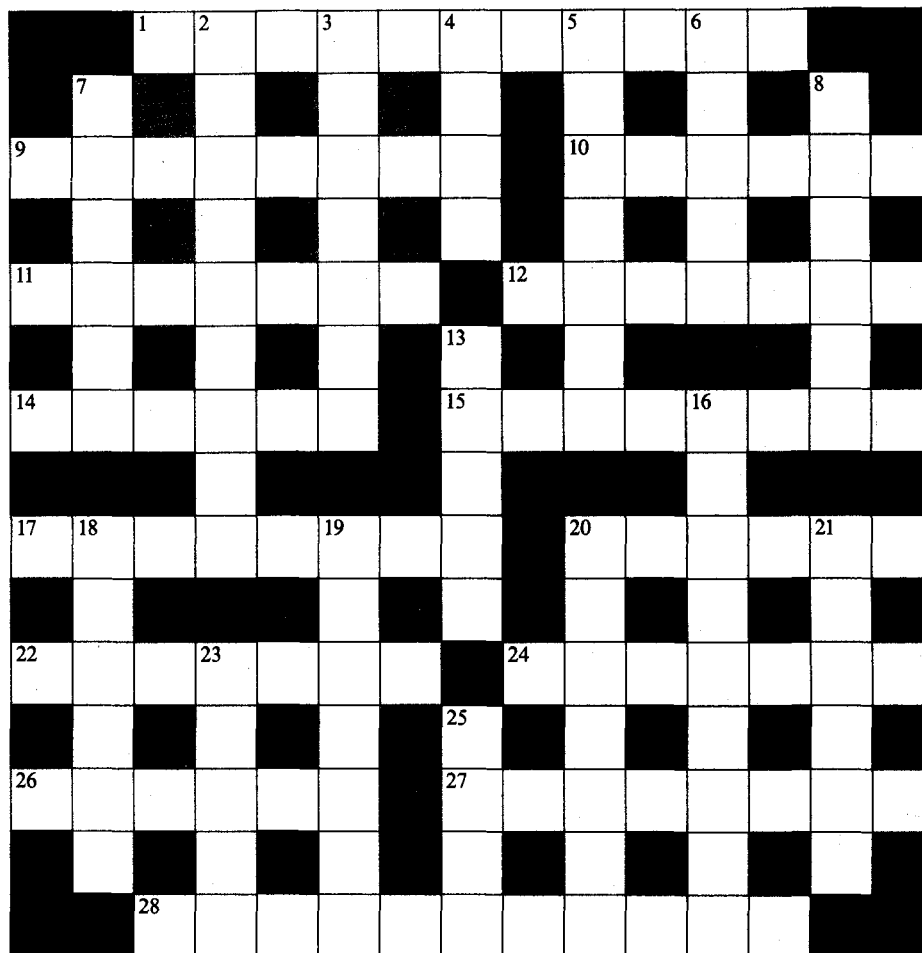
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- 1 So, you'll make someone happy with a polite request! (2,3,6)
- 9 Time sure looks different for a once-was! (8)
- 10 See 26 across
- 11 If you find any around something tiny, you'll have a scientific study—which was of a 21 in print. (7)
- 12 It's not a bad place to meet your spouse after work! (7)
- 14 Club having a couple of articles on a WW-II spot in the Pacific. (6)
- 15 See 6 down
- 17 A merry heart maketh such a countenance, according to the Bible . . . (8)
- 20 . . . and a Psalm properly interpreted might save a life! (6)
- 22 An old French coin? Take little notice—otherwise you'll find it in South America . . . (7)
- 24 . . . along with wild animals such as Kipling never saw. (7)
- 26 and 10 Some of the central states seem to be having trouble, but the situation looks good if it's this! (5,7)
- 27 A unit of radiation found when the units are not green. (8)
- 28 One such as 24, having difficult clues for "rotifers, for example." (11)

DOWN

- 2 One might walk here from home, as the closest military supply point. (5,4)

- 3 Sort of 8 not in with the fellow, making something to sit on! (7)
- 4 and 25 I hear you passed your doctoral exam by describing Beethoven's Sixth! (8)
- 5 A stretcher might be made of it, or its lace. (7)
- 6 and 15 across Does it involve making up your mind to scram—or just different opinions concerning a ring display? (5,7)
- 7 A male legal authority, also a female. (6)
- 8 Where to look for the qualities of Dorothy's dog, on the whole. (2,4)
- 13 The solid makeup of things some worship . . . (5)
- 16 . . . perhaps represented by something like this. (9)
- 18 Did he lack this raised in anger? (6)
- 19 Sort of floats on the Mediterranean capital—or on any ocean. (7)
- 20 Gold plate? Quite the reverse, but it could be familiar to those who live high! (7)
- 21 Uprising with bloodlike spirit, it makes a killing. (6)
- 23 A broken line would certainly appear strange! (5)
- 25 See 4

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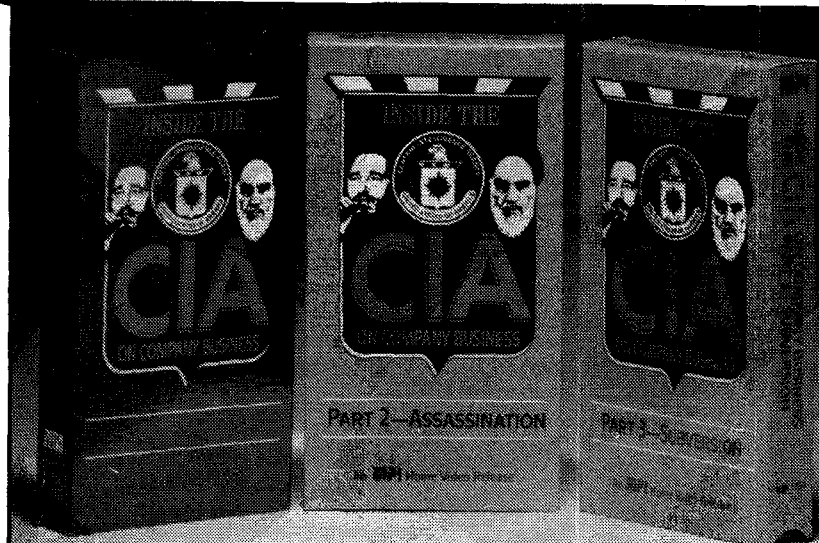
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